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Military Chaplains' Review

Summer 1989

Religious Education

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Professional Bulletin of the US Army Chaplain Corps

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Military Chaplains' Review

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Professional Bulletin of the US Army Chaplain Corps

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Introduction to the Summer Issue

Religious education is a vital part of chaplains' ministry. We are fortunate to have Directors of Religious Education and Religious Education Coordinators to assist us in this ministry. A partnership such as this between DRE's and chaplains requires careful and regular maintenance if it is to be effective. As you read these articles written by DRE's, take a moment to reflect on your relationship with your DRE. Is he or she an accepted member of the unit ministry team? Is there just the right amount of supervision, not leaving the DRE totally alone to wander in the military wilderness, but conversely, not micro-managing, either? Is there grudging approval of the RE mission, benign neglect, or active positive interest?

Taking time to discuss the articles with your religious education director or coordinator would be profitable for both. Pressures of tasks and lack of time sometimes pre-empt discussing working relationships. Opportunities for affirmation, discussion of new ideas, or a frank exchange of personal differences could illuminate and strengthen the relationship.

I am grateful to all the Directors of Religious education for their invaluable ministry to soldiers and their families. For those who wrote these articles, my gratitude knows no bounds. My friend and colleague at the Agency, Chaplain Paul Vicalvi deserves credit for this volume. He solicited, collected and initially edited the articles presented in this issue.

Our Winter, 1990 issue will focus on a narrative history of the chaplaincy. We intend to publish articles highlighting the rich heritage we all share, no matter which chaplain branch we serve. One perspective is strongly desired: the service of chaplains in the Vietnam war. What are your "ministry stories?" Many who have experiences in combat ministry are near retirement. We need to hear from you and learn from you, while you are still present with us to teach. Active duty or retired, let me hear from you.

Chaplain (Major) Granville E. (Gene) Tyson
Editor

What is Religious Education?

Paul L. Vicalvi

Education is one of the most important things that we do as a society. We strive for better schools, better teachers and better facilities. As parents, we want our children to be in the best programs possible so that they will achieve their maximum human potential. When it comes to the subject of religious education, our society may not hold the same standard. Many religious education facilities within our military settings are very old and have inadequate space and lighting. Priority of budgeting does not usually go to religious education programs. All of these issues and many more are a challenge, to say the least, for the creative mind in religious education. But how about our mindset as members of the chapel community when we think of religious education? Is it really as important to us as secular education? And if not, why not? Does what we practice square with what we believe?

The purpose of this article is to look into the meaning of religious education, particularly in the area of Christian education, and to honestly reflect on the questions asked above. Emphasis will be placed on how Christian education relates to the life of the Church stemming from the belief that it is one of the most important things that we do in passing "the Faith" along from generation to generation as the Kingdom of God unfolds in history.

What is Christian Education?

When we think of Christian education, we normally think of Sunday School or CCD. If we are chaplains, we might see Christian education as one of our lesser responsibilities. In many cases, the responsibility for its success is given to a junior chaplain if there is not a Director of Religious

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Education employed. Our seminaries might inherently foster this lesser importance and subtly teach us this by many times making only one basic Christian Education course required, which is often a very anemic course. We emphasize courses in homiletics, and pastoral counseling as the real power courses for effective pastoring. Yet, a proper understanding of what Christian Education really is should help us see that it should become a primary focus of our ministries.

Thomas Groome, a leading Christian educator simply stated, "The purpose of Christian religious education is to enable people to live as Christians, that is, to live lives of Christian faith.[1] In other words, Christian Education must be more than just Sunday School. Viewed this way I think that we will readily see our horizons of Christian Education need to be broadened. One of the primary responsibilities of the Church is to provide Christian education; in fact most of what we should be about in the Church is Christian education.

It is difficult to precisely define Christian Education because of its far-reaching implications. I will define it and then give examples of what I mean. Christian Education may be defined as the intentional way in which the Church guides persons to:

1. Grow in their awareness and response to God and His Word by the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Understand and respond to their special identity as Christians.
3. Become enabled to be of positive service in the pressing social and personal problems of the world.

This definition is given with an emphasis on the holistic approach to Christian education, seeing it as a lifelong spiritual journey or pilgrimage of the total person, a natural result of which is an outreach to the world at large. In other words, Christian education does not just take place on Sunday mornings for one hour and is not just for children. It should take place in all of our worship services and beyond this, throughout the week in the many activities, both formal and informal, that the Church and its people, both young and old are involved in. John H. Westerhoff, another leading Christian educator, says "Education correctly understood is not identical with schooling. It is an aspect of socialization involving all deliberate, systematic and sustained efforts to transmit or evolve knowledge, attitude, values, behaviors and sensibilities.[2]

Let me first define some of the terms that I have used.

The Church

One of the key terms that needs to be defined in the definition above is the word "Church". The Church is the community gathered by God through Christ. John Calvin defined the Church as a visible, concrete, historical reality which emerged in the first century, exists to this day,

[1] *Christian Religious Education*, p. 34.

[2] *Will Our Children Have Faith?*, p. 17.

and will exist into the future until God chooses to change things on this earth as we know them now. The Church is people- "called out ones", who have chosen to walk in the way of the Kingdom of God through Jesus Christ. With all its imperfections through the centuries and even into today, it is the means by which God imparts His Grace to the world. It is that special and unique institution that God has chosen to work through by the power of the Holy Spirit. God works through the institution of the Church and the individuals of the Church to impart grace to our world in a way that is unique and very special. Through the gifts and talents that He gives each Christian believer, and the special ways that He works in and through each believer, He pours out a supernatural blessing as they exercise and share these in and outside of the community of faith. What I would emphasize with this understanding then is that God has not chosen to operate apart from the Church. Anyone who claims to be a Christian and feels that he/she can practice at home apart from the community of faith is deceived. To be a part from the Church means to be a part of a special group of people with a special story to tell. George W. Stroup, an Associate Professor of Theology at Austin Theological Seminary describes the coming of a person into the Church as a "collision between the identity narratives of individuals and the identity narratives of the Christian community.[3] The Christian community uniquely interprets our past, explains what is to be done in the present and what is to be expected in the future as God has revealed it to His people. It is to this community of faith that the task of Christian education is given. Thomas Groome expresses it well: "It is within a Christian social/cultural environment that people come to appropriate the symbols which carry forward the tradition. It is there that they encounter role models, a world view, and a value system that can be interiorized as their own Christian self-identity.[4]

I think that it is very easy to become comfortable within our chapels and to have programs and a mindset that clings to the status quo. We are part of a system that has tended to do that through the centuries. It seems that no one wants to "rock the boat" yet I see this as a damning sleep from which we must be wakened. We must be very aware as Church leaders, of the things that are causing us to lose our uniqueness as our chameleonlike tendencies cause us to blend into our culture. The Gospel calls us to question and critique where our Christian communities are unfaithful in their response to God. One of the goals of Christian Education should be to do just that. For example, in our transient military society I have seen that there can be a cliquishness in the Christian community, and at times power struggles due to rank structure. Issues like this need to be addressed in our chapels so that we can move closer to being a true *community* of believers. We need to encourage our

[3] *The Promise of Narrative Theology*, p. 91.

[4] *Christian Religious Education*, p. 115.

people to look at Biblical teachings on lowering our barriers; our responsibility for one another; and the privilege of being a leader that serves instead of being served. These and other issues are sometimes hard to confront, but we need to be intentional and faithful in our leadership and teaching. One of the very important challenges that confronts us today in the Church is to be "The Church." I believe that the most powerful leverage for change in the Church comes from within the Church.

The Holy Spirit

Although the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity rested on selected persons from the community of faith in the Old Testament, Pentecost marked the pouring out of His presence on all members of that community. *John* 15 emphasizes His role as teacher and comforter and it is these attributes that we focus on when we think of Christian education. It is the Teacher of Truth, the Holy Spirit that moves us toward God in the first place and then bestows faith on us. It is that same Spirit who makes the Gospel meaningful to us, who convicts us and shows us our own brokenness before a Sovereign God. And then it is that same comforting Spirit who brings us new life and starts us on our faith journey. I agree with Luther that God's Spirit brings us to hell and frustration to convey to us the hopelessness of our condition, and then conveys the hope of God and His presence. The Holy Spirit transforms the void we feel and know within ourselves into the gracious presence of God. The presence and work of the Holy Spirit is so essential in the work of Christian education. It is His presence that really separates Christian education from any other kind of education. Although we can plan events in Christian education, we cannot plan the work of the Holy Spirit; there is no guarantee of a particular or predictable work.

Christian education is not brainwashing. It cannot be viewed as opening up a person's head and pouring in knowledge that will make a person Christian or act like a Christian. John H. Westerhoff III has correctly observed that the type of religious schooling that merely seeks to impart knowledge in the student's head has often produced "educated atheists"[5] Perhaps this is what many of our churches have produced in the past. Dead or stale facts taught by detached teachers (no matter what facet of Christian education they may be in) have stood between God and His people through the years. What is needed is a *community* of faith that is a *communicator* of faith-where real, lived out faith is the concern of Christian education. But this can only come when both teacher and student realize they are both in need of the grace of God and the guidance and renewal of the Holy Spirit. Christian Education is not just the giving of pat answers. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, the goal of Christian education is to help people to think, to learn, to experience, to feel, to

[5] *Will Our Children Have Faith?*, p. 22.

stretch, to test, and to grow as a Christian. It is to help focus the guiding light that leads each Christian along the unique and special path that he/she walks on.

Intentionality

Another key word which must be explained in the definition of Christian education is "intentional". Positive Christian education does not just happen. We must be intentional in what we are about or negative education that is not Christian could result. Lawrence Cremin defines education as "the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities, as well as any outcomes of that effort."[6] Groome emphasizes intentionality in this definition of Christian education. We often assume incorrectly that all experience is educational. Groome says, "Some experiences are miseducational and others are not educational at all because we do not attend deliberately and intentionally to what they could possibly teach us."[7] As we focus on the Christian community of faith within the service, I think that it is imperative that we help chaplains, Directors of Religious Education and lay leaders to understand the essential truth of intentionality. What are we really teaching in our Chapels? I know of a teacher in a Sunday School who taught her class and then immediately left and went home, every week! She never attended worship services at all. What was she teaching her students as she did this week after week? What she taught outside of class was more powerful than anything that she taught in class and she was allowed to go on this way for a year before she was replaced (I am not aware that she was even approached about this situation either during the time she was teaching). All of our activities in the Church should be examined to see if they are really teaching Christian values and the lifestyle of the Kingdom. I am reminded of the words given to the children of Israel as recorded in *Deuteronomy* 6:6-9:

> And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons (daughters) and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as bands on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Although this can be applied to the Christian home (and I will give an example in my conclusion that shows the impact of this), I think that it can also be applied to the community of faith. C. Ellis Nelson, a visiting professor of Christian Education at Austin Seminary shows this in his "Guidelines for Communicating Christian Faith". "The congregation, then, is the school of faith. All that the congregation does is both a

[6] quoted from Thomas Groome's *Christian Religious Education*, p. 20.

[7] *Ibid*, p. 20.

means of communicating the faith and a subject of investigation." [8] I would contend that everything we do in our Chapels is teaching something. The care of the facility (as best as we can under sometimes very difficult situations), the preparation of our worship bulletins, the preparation of the altar, the treatment of visitors, and last but not least, the cleanliness and preparation of our religious education classrooms, teaches something.

Essentials for Christian Education

There are essential activities necessary to set the atmosphere for intentional Christian educating. In giving these I have included the Scriptures that support them.

1. Telling the Christian story to each other and interpreting its meaning for our lives. (*Deut.* 6:6-9; *Acts* 2:41-47; *Col.* 3:16).
2. Celebrating our faith and our lives together especially in rituals and worship (*Col.* 3:16; *Philippians* 3:3).
3. Praying together and for one another (*Matt.* 18:18-20; *James* 5:16).
4. Listening and talking to one another (with an emphasis on listening!) Along with this being open to learn from another person (*James* 1:19; *Eph.* 4:15,25; 5:19).
5. Confessing to one another, forgiving each other and reconciling with one another (*Gal.* 6:1-2; *James* 5:16).
6. Tolerating each other's failures, and encouraging each other (*Eph.* 4:32).
7. Performing faithful acts of service and witness together (*Matt.* 25:32-46; *James* 3:13).
8. Suffering for one another (*Gal.* 6:2).
9. Providing hospitality and care, especially to strangers (*Luke* 14:12; *Rom.* 12:10-13; *Heb.* 13:2).
10. Attending to one another's needs (*Luke* 22:26; *Philippians* 2:2-5).

I believe that these activities can be taught and lived in our churches and that growth in faith beyond our wildest dreams will take place when we attend to these very Biblical imperatives.

Christian Education is Like . . .

One of the hobbies that I have developed is working with stained glass. I have found that no two pieces of stained glass work come out the same way. It is impossible to duplicate a pattern or design exactly because of the different hues and cuts of glass. If we could liken this to an individual it would be an illustration of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of each unique person. The task of Christian education is not to stamp out

[8] *Where Faith Begins*, p. 186.

duplicate Christians, but to help each person grow on their unique Christian pilgrimage or journey as a unique individual—a work of art in God's plan. We are not genetically programmed to turn out a certain way nor can we construct an environment that will condition persons in a certain way. Although there are similarities in each person because they are just that—"persons"—as they are Christians, each person grows and develops uniquely, a beautiful vessel of God's design.

Can we come to see that just about everything that we do in our chapels has the potential for being positive Christian Education? If we go back to Thomas Groome's definition quoted above and understand that Christian Education's purpose is to enable people to live as Christians, then we can see that our worship services, our Women and Men of the Chapels groups, our youth groups, our soldier's ministries, etc. are parts of our Christian Education program. Each piece of our chapel program is a uniquely fashioned part of the whole design that expresses a part of Christian Education. By itself, each piece has an individual beauty, but lacks completeness apart from the whole. Christian Education ministries are beautiful in themselves, yet on their own lack a completeness. And apart from the Cross they become just another social activity. Soldered together by the power of God's Spirit they become a beautiful, unique, expressive design of their Artisan.

Conclusion

I hope that this article has communicated that all of life can be an occasion for Christian education. It does not have to take place in a Church building. Recently I heard Dr. James Dobson, a renowned Christian family psychologist, speaking on the radio in his program "Focus on the Family". Dr. Dobson told of his two year old son Ryan who had not yet been asked to pray out loud in their home. Dr. Dobson was away on a trip and his wife asked young Ryan if he would like to pray before one of their meals. Ryan very simply bowed his head, folded his hands and prayed, "I love you daddy". His dad was his closest perception of God. Dr. Dobson went on to explain that he did not like the idea of being perceived as God because he so often made mistakes and wasn't there when he should have been, but like it or not, that was the perception that young Ryan had. I think that we can teach people that Christian education can take place in all of life's experiences. We must teach this to our Church families. Horace Bushnell, a 19th century educator emphasized the home as the primary source of Christian nurture and education. The Christian parent is a teacher in even a more profound sense than the teacher in a church setting. I see the home as an image of what the Church or community of faith is to be, and I believe that if we are doing what we should be doing in our Church building, what is done out of our Church building in the home and in our society will be much more effectively "Christian". I believe, along with Dr. Westerhoff, that, "The church can never exist for itself; it is never an

end, only a means. Its mission, its end, is to be a community where Christian faith is proclaimed, experienced, understood, lived, and acted upon in history."[9] I believe that Christian education is education for the Christian life and that God is its source. God is at work reconciling and loving us just as we are, yet desiring so much more for us. There is a need in our faith communities to make room for doubts and questions. The living community of faith will allow us our struggles without squelching them. I believe that this comes from the soul-gripping belief that God does not leave us in our struggles. Sometimes that is easy to forget. Christian education that is relevant and practical will allow each person to make "The Faith" their own.

[9] *Will Our Children Have Faith?*, p. 42.

"Get Yourself Out of These Bushes!"

Julia Kimberly Casey

It was the day after Labor Day in 1975. I had just graduated from Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. After taking an oath to defend the Constitution I was escorted by my new supervisor to my office. The Protestant Religious Education Center was located in a former World War II mess hall which still had a "T" in front of its number. The "T" stood for temporary. It was built in 1941.

Since the Center had been without a Director for several months, it needed attention. The sidewalk had been taken over by shrubs and bushes while the inside needed sunshine and paint. It needed work. After a few minutes the Chaplain turned to leave. We walked up the sidewalk together. I asked "What should I do first?" His reply has stayed with me for 14 years. He answered, "First, get yourself out of these bushes."

A seemingly innocent statement you might say. I thought so too. If I could just clear away the bushes the building would be seen; I could walk on the sidewalk, plant flowers along the edge and welcome people into the center. So, I began to work.

It did not take me long to recognize the deeper implication to that very simple directive. In the Army the path to a creative, quality Religious Education program is not easy. It is often filled with pot holes and overgrown with bushes. But there are many flowers along the way. The people in the Army are special flowers that make clearing the brush worthwhile.

You're In the Army Now!

A career with the military as a Director of Religious Education is much like a path. For me, the sidewalk leading to building T212 represents my journey with the Army. There was much to be learned as I began walking

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along that sidewalk. There were cracks in the pavement, rocks in the way and one bush was filled with wasps. Each time it rained the sidewalk acted like a canal and flooded under the building. On such days we laughingly called the sidewalk, the "Jordan", and the Center, the "Ark".

I quickly learned how to call the engineers, the agronomist, the exterminators and the grounds crew. I was determined to make the Center a warm, friendly place. I even ordered tulips to plant along the sidewalk.

The rudimentary parts of my primary work in the Army became easier for me as I raised questions. How do I get curriculum? How do I find teachers? What kind of training do they need? How do I buy supplies? At the same time I was establishing my identity as a professional educator. What is my ministry? What do I do as a Religious Educator? What skills are useful? How do I use them with the Army?

A Southern Baptist from a small East Texas town, I had been a summer missionary in Utah and active in the Baptist Student Union. My emphasis in seminary was missions. My work with the military challenged my training and my philosophy of traditional Christian education. Much of the conflict I felt was spiritual. The following real life incidents may help you identify with my struggle:

I was at a denominational luncheon with other religious educators. We were visiting and talking about our work when one asked, "What made you leave the ministry; don't you still believe in evangelism?"

The first Jewish Rabbi I ever met was a young chaplain on his first tour of duty. I invited him to teach an adult Bible class for me using the topic of "The Torah". As we were loading his car and I was thanking him for all his hard work, he said "Remember, Kim, I want to help you be the best Christian you can be."

A Charismatic left flowers on my office door the day she knew I had a very important briefing to present. A note said, "During your briefing I'll be praying for you!"

My partner, a Catholic Sister, prayed with me through many rough times. Imagine my shock when an old school friend whom I visited on vacation asked me, "Do you really believe Catholics are going to heaven?"

I do not really think I understood the full meaning of grace until a Methodist Chaplain challenged my "works" theology by saying, "Don't you know that if you never do another thing for God, He'll always love you?"

My Episcopal friends asked me to be a god-parent to their new son. The priest baptized the baby and then held him up and walked down the aisle stopping to show the congregants the smiling child. He said, "This is your brother, a new member of our family. It is up to us, the

Family of God, to ensure that he grows up to know how much he is loved by God."

As I endeavored to clear the path to building T212 and as I began to clear the brush from my own spiritual path, I discovered several areas within the military which were in tension with each other. Some were spiritual and others were systemic.

Now fourteen years later those tensions still exist. I suspect they will as long as there are civilian Directors of Religious Education employed by the military. Identifying these areas for myself has helped to alleviate some of the stress that accompanies the tension created by the polarities. My hope is that putting them in writing will help "name" them for other military religious educators who may be wrestling these persistent giants.

Specific Civilian Ecclesiastical Training

The first area I have identified has to do with the professional training Religious Educators receive. Most of us are trained to create and provide religious education for a specific denomination. Our institutions are denomination specific. I was trained to provide religious education in a Southern Baptist setting. My knowledge of other Protestant programs, much less Jewish or Catholic, was nonexistent. An example: I had been with the Army about two weeks. I received a telephone call from a Lutheran lay person working on an advent program. She asked what materials the resource center had to offer on advent. I asked her to hold on while I checked the catalog. While she was on hold I had to first look up advent in the dictionary before I could help.

The Army requires Directors of Religious Education, especially those who are protestant and those working outside of United States to be skilled and knowledgeable in all faith groups. The conflict occurs when one asks "Where am I supposed to learn these skills?"

Annual training for Directors of Religious Education has occurred regularly for several years in CONUS and USAREUR. The training usually takes the form of professional update in the area of religious education. In VII Corps the Directors of Religious Education meet twice a year to train in requirements unique to the Army. Some of these include ministry to the soldier, the general protestant program, and ordering curriculum. We also learn about a major faith group each session. We teach the protestants about Catholic curriculum and sacraments. We experienced rabbinical teaching in a session which stands out as a significant learning experience in my spiritual growth. There was also a panel on the major strains of protestantism for the Catholics. All of this training is conducted within our ranks. After all, who is more expert on the Army Catholic program than an Army Catholic DRE?

Whose Program Is It?

In civilian churches we accept the religious education program as belonging to the parish or the congregation. It was very difficult for me to accept the fact that the religious education program, as well as the entire religious program, belongs to the commander. The commander decides the funding, facility, professional staffing and, in some cases, programming. The real conflict for me is when the commander is not religious. It took years for me to accept the fact that the commander is responsible for the physical, emotional and spiritual well being of the soldiers and their families.

Where Do I Fit In?

When I visit religious education coordinators in chapels in Germany the same issue comes up and over and over. How do I relate to the military?

The tension between the military and the civilian never seems to end. I have fought many a battle over who is in control. It can be disheartening to know you work in a system in which you will never be "the boss" no matter how you succeed or how many years you stay. My greatest stress has often come from young enlisted who, in my perception, refuse to acknowledge my professional status. One day a young private helped me understand. He said "Ma am, you don't understand. Everybody in this Army outranks me; I don't need another boss."

All My Teachers Are Leaving

Military transiency is an underlying condition with which the Director of Religious Education must always contend. There have been years when I trained new teachers continuously only to lose all of them to PCS moves during the summer. It seemed I never inherited trained teachers although I was certain my colleagues at other installations were also feeling the same.

My real conflict comes with programming. There is a tendency to say "No, Mrs. Jones, I'm sorry we don't have a youth program, but when you go back to the States to Fort so and so, they will." The problem is Mrs. Jones cannot wait. Her teen-ager is at a critical formation age. She wants her son to have strong Christian values as a foundation for his adult life. The trouble is one assignment equals a whole high school career. How do I as a Religious Educator provide a quality program for everyone?

Then What Can I Teach?

Free exercise of religion was a totally new concept for me. I discovered that part of my job was to protect other's rights to worship the way they choose. For adults this is not such a big problem because they are most able to make their own decisions. Children are a different story. I found

myself in the position of protecting children from enthusiastic groups who would, if given a change, make religious decisions for children which may be contrary to the choice they would make as adults. Today I automatically ask "Is this really an ecumenical group?" "If it is ecumenical, are all faith positions offered?" "Is an individual being placed in an environment which does not enhance their own religious tradition?" Until children are old enough to make their own choices, part of my role as a Religious Educator is to protect their right to make those choices.

Can you see my conflict?

Do I Really Have to Order Materials for Them?

I will never forget the first time I spent all afternoon calling publishers looking for copies of the Koran. It was so foreign and I felt guilty until I handed the Koran to the soldier who wanted it. He was so grateful. I remembered the scripture which talks about loving your enemies. It came to me that it is easy to love those who are like you. The real test is when you can love those who are different. Being a servant does not apply just to those who are easy to love.

Living Creatively Within the Tensions

As I mentioned earlier, I worked to clear away shrubs and brush from in front of building T212 for nine years. In 1984 I moved to Germany and inherited a new sidewalk. There are rocks and bushes that are obstructing creative religious education within the VII Corps. Directors of Religious Education still live with the same areas of tensions compounded by a foreign culture and the mandate by the Army to serve all faith areas.

In order to function in this environment I have learned to:

- determine the skills that religious education in all faith areas have in common, learn these skills and use them.
- emphasize what I have in common with other faith groups.
- broaden my perspective to include others who are not like me.
- be willing to take risks. This means you will often be theologically vulnerable. It means being willing to struggle with your belief.
- push for what I believe is correct.
- draw my parameters and determine what cannot be theologically violated for me.
- accept people where they are.
- finally, when I feel threatened or unsure about the direction I should take; or when my loyalty to my own beliefs feels shaken, I remember the scripture found in II Timothy 1:12: " . . . for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day." I may feel confused, but God is never uncertain. Christ knows the commitments I have made and will keep them safe for me.

Anticipating Future Bush Clearing

In the last 14 years the Director of Religious Education ministry has come a long way. I believe there is still much that can be done to enhance the career of the Religious Educator who chooses to minister in the military.

Some of my personal sidewalk has been cleared. What I can see ahead of me includes more potholes and shrubs. The flowers that have grown up along the way make all the path clearing worthwhile. The flowers are the many special military people I have met and grown to love. It is these people that motivate me to lean over my hoe and sharpen my clippers.

I want to clear the sidewalk for them.

Army Religious Education: Survival Skills for a Pluralistic Ministry

Edward J. Horan

The Army Chaplaincy is a lab: a unique learning and testing environment where the professional religious educator can probe the issues of religious education and ministry in a pluralistic context representing a microcosm of American society. How the director of religious education (DRE) rises to such a challenge, and to what extent he/she develops the attitudes and skills necessary to do religious education in a military environment will determine whether he/she fails or succeeds.

Practically speaking, this boils down to the real-life questions every new DRE asks. How does a Catholic DRE relate to a Southern Baptist supervisor? How does a Lutheran work effectively under the leadership of an IFCA chaplain? Is it possible for an Assemblies of God DRE to flourish under an evangelical chaplain? How does a DRE reconcile differing visions of what religious education is or entails: the supervisor's view, the DRE's assessment (which might or might not agree with the chaplain's), and the community's (or parish council's) desire to have a say in the shaping of its own educational ministry? And how should the DRE respond if the community insists on using materials that are not included in the Cooperative Curriculum? This is but a sampling.[1] Every DRE could add many more, as well as cherished memories and horror stories of working in a pluralistic environment that is both blessing and bane.

[1] A fuller exposition of the issue of pluralism as it affects Army DREs can be found in my earlier article, "The DRE as Ecumenist in the Pluralistic Military Community," *Military Chaplains' Review* 13, 1 (Winter, 1984) pp. 33-42.

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The intent of this article is to delineate some practical skills and techniques for succeeding as a professional DRE in a military environment. The problem will be addressed from three perspectives: the DRE in fidelity to his or her chaplain supervisor; the DRE in fidelity to him/herself; and the DRE in fidelity to the community or communities he or she serves. This is often a painful undertaking. Self-examination and the change it often demands are rarely easy. Yet not to undertake this task as a part of one's professional formation and private spiritual journey is to end up with distrust, fear, the casting of stereotypes, and destructive attitudes; this will lead to the weakening or total incapacitation of the DRE's ministry. What this writer suggests in what follows is not meant to be a panacea, but suggested steps toward building understanding and trust so that together chaplains, DREs, and congregations may experience harmonious religious educational ministry.

A Threefold Challenge

There are three visions the DRE must reconcile if he/she is to be effective: the chaplain's, the DRE's own, and the community's. It is the community's perception of its own needs, that is paramount. In order to be most effective, the DRE (and chaplain) first and foremost must be responsive to the needs of the military chapel community, *regardless of what they might think about those needs or how they might judge the congregation theologically.*

The DRE, like the chaplain, is called to serve the community, not to mold the community to his or her own mindset. This tension is obviated somewhat by the tendency of military chapel congregations to adapt, over time, until they become a reflection of the incumbent chaplain-pastor. For example, if a Southern Baptist chaplain is the pastor of a specific chapel congregation for his/her entire tour of duty at a given installation, that chaplain's presence will have a direct bearing on the shape of the worship service. Consequently, those who are attracted to that kind of service, and to whom that chaplain's theology appeals, will come and remain, while those who do not feel "at home" will find another chapel more suited to their preferences.[2] However, the DRE, unlike the chaplain, usually is not part of the equation. In the triangle of chaplain-DRE-congregation, if there is an "odd man out" it will be the DRE, and usually for denominational reasons.[3]

[2] This is not supposed to happen, but it does. It exemplifies the perennial tension between theory and practice that exists in all institutions.

[3] This dynamic is more likely to occur where there is only one DRE for an entire military community or installation. It also tends to be the case for Protestant DREs in general since, on each installation, they must serve a Protestant populace representing a broad theological and liturgical spectrum. Catholic and Jewish DREs are less likely to experience this, unless they are the only DRE for a given installation, due to the hemogeneity of the faith communities in which they work: Catholic/Jewish chaplain, DRE, and congregation.

Against this backdrop, two things are foundational for the DRE: establishing him/herself as a professional in the supervisory chaplain's eyes, and gaining the trust of the congregation(s). Both are critical. Both benefits issues of acceptance.

Before the DRE can be accepted he/she must develop and practice the virtue of acceptance. Acceptance is understood here as being the attitude, and practice, of believing and upholding the other person's right to be different—theologically, liturgically, and in the area of praxis.

Acceptance: A Phenomenological Approach

The real problem with religious pluralism is that it calls into question our understanding of absolute truth. This is compounded by the missionary nature of Christianity which is the predominant religion of the military chaplaincies. However, this tendency to consider all other creeds as being in error is germane to most religions. It is a virtually universal, religious equivalent of ethnocentrism, the nationalistic sense of elitism that casts as inferior the peoples of all nations or races other than one's own. For this reason, when addressing the issue of religious pluralism in the military, it does not matter whether one is discussing intra-Christian relationships (the *ecumenical* sphere) or the relationship between chaplains, DRE's and congregations of different religions (the *inter-religious* sphere).[4] The dynamics are the same. Thus, to minister effectively in the armed forces, one must operate from the stance that truth is larger than one's confessional definition or understanding of it.

The phenomenology of Edmund Huserl, an early twentieth century German philosopher, provides a tool for working within another's belief structure without calling one's own faith into question.

Phenomenology deals with the question of the perception and interpretation of reality (experiences and events *as perceived*). It deals with the question: Is what I am perceiving the essence of the reality or only its appearances? Is there a "pure" essence behind the appearances, or are the appearances the entire reality? Or both?[5] Through a process called "bracketing," the investigator seeks to prescind from both the appearances *and his/her own attitude or beliefs* about the phenomenon being examined in order to let the essential reality "speak for itself." By bracketing or prescinding from one's understanding of a phenomenon,

[4] The terms *ecumenical* and *inter-religious* are used here with the meanings they traditionally have had in Christian theology. However, in our linguistically imprecise age, this distinction is in danger of being lost. The term *inter-religious* is hardly heard anymore and *ecumenism* is being used to describe the rapprochement of every kind of religious, and even secular, body. An excellent discussion of the broadening usage of *ecumenism* can be found in Norma H. Thompson, "The Challenge of Religious Pluralism," in Norma H. Thompson, ed., *Religious Pluralism and Religious Education* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1988), pp. 11-12.

[5] Karl Lehmann, "Phenomenology," in Karl Rahner et al., eds., *Sacramentum Mundi* IV (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969, 6 vols.), p. 423.

one is free to enter into the experience under examination in an unbiased way. In the study of religion, bracketing is used in the examination of the other kinds of religious experience without letting one's own beliefs influence one's judgment about the validity of the religion being studied.

In religious education ministry, bracketing takes the form of a question. Can I prescind from my beliefs so as to act in a loving, non-judgmental and supportive way towards the religious convictions of those I am called to serve? This process is not a suspension of belief, even less a denial. Rather, it is the humble recognition that one does not have a corner on ultimate truth. Only from this can flow a stance of openness towards other denominations and faiths.

Not to do this is to pay lip service to the beliefs of others, leading to an easily detected condescending attitude toward other faiths. "I serve them because I am required to, but I really wish they were [Christian, Catholic, Lutheran, fundamentalist, etc.] Such an attitude can cripple our ministry. It can lead to evaluating educational needs with a confessional bias. It is an easy step from that to resourcing with a confessional bias.

Paradoxically, it is by endeavoring to take a neutral stance toward the faiths of others that the full integration of our beliefs and our actions is manifested. The necessity for this alignment of belief and action is a central message of the First Letter of John. "This is the way we may know we are in union with him: whoever claims to abide in him ought to live just as he lived . . . Whoever says he is in the light, yet hates his brother is still in darkness. (1 *Jn* 2: 5b,9) The point here is not to equate the word *hate* with non-acceptance. Instead, it is to show that rejecting one's neighbor in an effort to uphold what we believe is inconsistent with the Gospel. "Whoever *says he is in the light* [belief], yet *hates his brother* [action] is still in darkness [beliefs and actions not yet integrated]. A religious conversion, yes; an intellectual conversion, perhaps; a moral conversion, no.[6]

[6] Here I am using 'conversion' in the sense defined by Bernard Lonergan: a horizon shift; a pushing back, or broadening of the boundaries of a person's scope of awareness and understanding. It encompasses the entire transition from unbelief and results in an internal transformation that embraces the whole person. For Lonergan, there are six stages to the conversion process. The three that I refer to here are defined as follows. Religious conversion is nothing less than falling love, in this case with God. Intellectual conversion deals with what we would call belief. It concerns those cognitive data which form our attempt to put our encounter with the divine (revelation) into human language (theology). Moral conversion is our response in love to a loving God, our desire to let our relationship with him change our lives. Religious conversion is logically and experientially prior to the other two. It is only on the basis of a personal, salvific encounter with God that our coming to cognitive belief (intellectual conversion) and our decision to live a new way (moral conversion) have any meaning. See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) and Edward K. Braxton, *The Wisdom Community* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 72.

In order to provide religious educational ministry to persons of faiths not our own, we do not have to believe what they believe; but we do have to accept their creeds as being true for them. In the end we must be willing to ask ourselves: "Who am I to judge that this is not the way God chooses to reveal himself to them?

Tactics

Having laid a foundation like the one proposed above, the DRE can employ certain strategies to foster and maintain a climate of trust in the parish community. Here are a few possibilities.

1. *Learn about the faiths of those with whom and for whom you work.*[7] This can be tackled on several fronts. For example, in addition to studying specific denominations or faiths, one also might study the nature and causes of the breakup of Christianity, the commonalities of the various Christian churches, and the beliefs about God and humanity's relationship to him shared by all major religions.[8]

2. *Speak your hearer's language.* This is a basic article of diplomacy. By way of obvious, but significant, example, the terms *conversion* and *salvation* do not mean the same things to every Christian church. Similarly, the concept of sacrament as well as sacramental practices, most notably Eucharist and Matrimony, have widely divergent meanings among the churches. Being articulate about the theological traditions of one's supervisor and the community or communities one serves is essential for developing religious education programs that nurture soldiers and families in their chosen confessions instead of subtly catechizing them in a different theological school.

3. *Live your hearer's experience.* Worship with the communities you serve to the extent allowed by your church. Not only can this be a personally enriching experience, but professionally it probably is the single most valuable action a DRE can take. It proclaims to the community that we do not hold ourselves above or apart from them, but are willing to walk their communal journey of faith with them to the extent we are able.

4. *Have a sense of humor.* People who have the ability to laugh at the shortcomings of their own faith generally are more accepting of the faiths of others. Enough said.

[7] This strategy was the principal focus of my earlier article, op. cit., pp. 35-40.

[8] For more on the causes of denominationalism in Christianity see, for example, H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951); idem, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Hamden, Ct.: The Shoe String Press, 1954); and John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, *Protestant Christianity: Interpreted Through Its Development* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954). On the commonalities of the major religions, a good starting point would be Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: New American Library, 1964).

The Role of the Chaplain

In the final analysis, however, integration of the DRE into military faith communities requires more than just the efforts of the DRE. A crucial factor that only the chaplain-pastor can provide is explicit guidance to the community. There are times when chaplains need to, and should, say that in matters of chapel religious education programs, the DRE is in charge. This means, at bare minimum, that the DRE should be consulted about all actions affecting the religious education programs and that all resource requests be coordinated with him/her. There may even be times when the installation/community chaplain has to say this not to congregations but to his or her own chaplains. Such support is more than just a strategy. Alone, it is equal in importance and necessity to all other strategies combined.

Conclusion

No one can deny that ministry in a pluralist environment is a challenge. At times it is a threat, at times exhilaratingly liberating. My hope is that it will become less the former and more the latter as we allow ourselves to discover, in the experiences of our brother and sister sojourners, the incredible richness of the truth that is God as he unfolds himself in the varieties of human religious experience.

Not only can the military DRE survive but he/she can flourish if the interior attitude of acceptance is sought and nurtured. If the DRE is secure enough in his or her own tradition to be free to enter into the experiences of those of other creeds, then yes, religious educational ministry in a religiously diverse community where chaplain, DRE, and community come from different religious backgrounds can succeed. For, as I have tried to demonstrate, the question of who is theologically correct is not the issue. The real issue is: Are we willing to feed soldiers and their families their chosen food, to nurture them in their chosen faiths? This is an opportunity for growth, both personal and communal, that far outstrips what might be available in a more homogeneous civilian parish setting. It is a great challenge. But, with the grace of the One who called us to this ministry, we can rise to it.

Intervening With Hope

Dennis R. Scheck

A True Story

The Director of Religious Education (DRE) stood facing the twenty-two adults waiting for a class in parenting. A plan and a text had been prepared. Several enlisted soldiers, four men and three women, arrive. Just as the class was to begin, a family enters. Children were not expected, but there they were. A young pregnant woman was the last to arrive mumbling to herself, "I wish they would tell me what I'm charged with!" She was recognized by an agitated and agreeing couple who encouraged her complaints.

This class as so many are in the military, was mandatory. The group of young parents present had been accused of abuse, or neglect, of their children. The DRE had prepared a professional presentation to include lecture, small group activity, and sharing of life experiences.

The family found a place in the front row. The three children all under five years of age were quite restless not being accustomed to sitting and waiting for a class to begin. The DRE remembered struggling with his own small children in worship services and offered a compassionate smile to the exasperated young mother. This couple seemed especially tired; she in summer clothes on a somewhat cold day, and he in his BDUs wearing Private First Class stripes. The DRE was invited to teach because the regular chaplain teacher was called to other briefings on this the day before Thanksgiving 1988. The lesson plan so carefully prepared was waiting to be executed, but what was the point? So much was happening in the lives of these people. What could they in fact take in? What was

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it that the DRE could say that could make any kind of difference anyway?

The Unique Setting of Religious Education in the Army

Religious Education in the Army includes providing meaningful educational experiences in situations like the one just described. Growth for students in this situation requires the Chaplain or Director of Religious Education to decide on an effective training intervention technique. Intervention here will mean an intentional way of making authentic contact with the student so that meaningful educational communication can take place.

There are often two very distinct groups for which a Chaplain or Director of Religious Education is called upon to be facilitator and educator. The first group is the traditional Chapel congregation with its set of fairly routine needs and expectations. The second group is made up of a constellation of many groups in which non chapel-attending soldiers, couples or families are members. The expectations that these people bring to the class or workshop are very diverse and often bear little resemblance to the expectations of the chapel congregation. This difference of expectations is apparent in something as simple as what is acceptable language to use in conversing with the trainer. Training of soldiers both male and female in the unit classroom is not a job for someone easily offended. Phrases and gestures that are common in the unit setting are seldom heard and seen in the Chapel. (For good reason!)

Strategies of Intervention

In the next few pages I will recommend a basic unit of intervention that a religious educator in the Army can use as he or she sets about the task of doing ministry with soldiers and families within a non-chapel religious education framework.

It has been my experience that Chaplains and Directors of Religious Education choose to follow one of the two obvious orientations when conducting classes. They either structure their work with the goal of imparting knowledge and skills or they seek to share faith or religion. That is to say they either lean heavily on the EDUCATION part of Religious Education or on the RELIGIOUS part of Religious Education. Both of these strategies while sufficient for class or workshop content, are deficient for intervention. I will describe my concerns with each. A third less obvious alternative is available that has a much more likely chance of impacting students. This third strategy is the sharing of Hope.

Religious educators are quite familiar with the skills of imparting knowledge. After all, we have Sunday SCHOOLS, we teach Bible CLASSES, and we are religious EDUCATORS. Sharing information has been what we have done and are most comfortable doing. Knowledge is

an important function of Religious Education. Certainly an essential part of our job as a trainer or facilitator is to provide opportunities for some new information or skill to be imparted to our students. It is clear, though, that knowledge alone does not insure changed lives or even informed lives. If it were, every person who went to school would be educated, and every person who went to Sunday School would live a life committed to God. My own frustration is the high level of disinterest and even resentment soldiers exhibit at being required to attend training. I am a skilled teacher and have always worked closely with equally skilled co-teachers. The material we present has direct application to people's lives or their jobs and is taught with excitement and deep personal belief. Yet, many quickly lose interest and some even fall asleep. No, knowledge alone is not the answer to where we intervene into the lives of these students. Something else must come before, and along with information and skills if there is to be successful training.

We work in another area called faith. We are called upon to share our faith with others. We must keep in mind that our military environment is a pluralistic arena in which agreement on faith issues is often difficult to attain. Differences in tradition and style might tend to alienate some of our students. We may also find those for whom a reference to faith is motivation to head for the nearest door (if not physically at least mentally). To be sure, faith is what empowers us. Faith is the place religious educators ought to find identity for themselves, and never feel afraid to share. While faith is a more powerful intervener than knowledge, the possible reactions of people to our proclamation makes it inadequate as our means of intervention.

Both knowledge and faith have their place in our educational endeavors, but each is deficient as an effective means of intervention.

So what is left? If we eliminate knowledge and faith is there anything we can use to create that important link between ourselves and our students? Chaplains and Directors of Religious Education must continue to formulate materials with sound educational philosophy and skills augmented by deep personal belief. Focusing on an effective means of intervention does not diminish the need for sound teaching. We must also, however, locate a strategy that can quickly connect us with people and begin a process through which our educational efforts can effect change. Intervention is this doorway to people that makes change possible.

A World of Hopelessness

As we begin our search we must be a keen observer of people. Knowing the kinds of experiences our students are having will help define a strategy of intervention that will be appropriate. When we begin to closely look at what is happening in the world it is easy to become discouraged and cynical. Our day to day experience is at times, filled with mistrust, anger, frustration, and powerlessness. It seems at every turn

from young and old the voices of "ain't it awful" fill the papers, the air waves, and the common communication between neighbors across the back fence. Eric Fromm has put it this way:

> Our problem is not cruelty; it is not destructiveness. It is boredom. It is that life is meaningless. People complain about a bad marriage or a bad job, but if you ask them what really is behind all that, the answer is usually that life doesn't make sense. Life runs out of their hands like sand.[1]

What we believe is reality. What our perceptions are is reality. What we affirm to be true about our life and our society becomes the reality of our life and society. It is from this world view that our students come. Our society seems to want a new vision, but it can only speak of a dead end view.

New Directions

New affirmations about the world are needed from which a workable strategy of intervention can be formed. I would like to offer three assumptions that will set the parameters of our search.

The first of these assumptions is whatever we choose to do should be true to who we are as believers in God. Success can only come empowered by our God. Secondly, our strategy should have as its goal a way to help people grow. Thirdly, whatever we choose should have an ability to penetrate the student's defense mechanisms, which hide their hurt, loneliness, and alienation.

Hope an Answer

If we cannot use knowledge or faith as interveners, and after considering our student's world view, a strategy that meets the assumptions stated above is intervention through the sharing of Hope. Hope is a subject that has been defined in many ways. In this case, Hope is 1) the ability to believe that because there is a God who loves, there is always a future in that love, and 2) that each person has the ability to gain some control over their own future. It is what Dr. Hutschnecker calls Active Hope:

> Active Hope is an inner mental force that triggers the human will into action. It mobilizes an individual's vast energies in order to overcome obstacles that block his or her way toward a chosen goal.
>
> Active Hope is also a source of inspiration. It encourages us to believe that we possess the ability to accomplish near or distant goals. But it is also an inner force that sustains us in our struggle toward our objectives. Active Hope balances our inner needs with the controlling demands of an often harsh reality.[2]

[1] Eric Fromm quoted in: Forpe and McCollister, *The Sunshine Book*, Jonathan David Publishers, Inc., Middle Village, New York, 1979, p. 55.

[2] Hutschnecker, Arnold A., MD, *Hope*, G. P. Putnam's and Sons, New York, 1981, p. 61.

The greatest fear of most of us is that tomorrow will only be a repetition of today. Many people are stuck in a cycle of hurt, pain, suffering, and fear. Defense mechanisms that make life livable prevent people from taking risks that could help them grow. Without hope educational experiences will continue to only offer things they cannot deliver, and affirm the reality of continued failure.

Hope has too often been wrongly placed in the category of wishing. Hope rightly understood is the assent to a reality that may not have concrete proof, but has existence in a knowing that comes from within. Hopelessness must be cracked, if only a little bit, if any learning, growing, and change can ever begin. While we can never be fully prepared for the future and better days ahead cannot be promised, worse days need not be the reality either. God wills for his children that they be the best that they can be, empowered by the reality of His love for them. The religious educator must be committed to the idea that hope is a possibility and that this hope can be nurtured in those whom we teach. Our intervention, then, becomes more than a device, or a standard set of phrases with which to begin a class. It rather becomes a philosophy for being with people as leader, trainer, and friend. The impact of this relationship based on hope is further explained by Hutschnecker:

> Active Hope plays a fundamental role in all human relationships. In thought and feeling it produces the optimist, the man and woman with a positive *Weltanshauung*, world view which is a part of our personality and which eventually determines how we use our creative energies. Active Hope is beautifully expressed by the memorable words of the late Hubert Humphrey, 'Never give in! Never give up!' Thus in every successful human interaction, be it adult to adult, or child to adult, active hope plays a dominant role because it reassures us that things will work out, that we will win, or that whatever action we may wish to take will contribute to our survival or betterment of life."[3]

Hopeful Humor

There is another piece of this puzzle that too often gets forgotten. It is a tool that begins to open a wedge to the inside where our student's feelings reside. This tool that breaks into the heart of men and women is humor. Humor is a secret key to gaining a little control of one's life. Rollo May speaks about humor:

> It is not generally realized how closely one's sense of humor is connected with one's sense of selfhood. Humor normally should have the function of preserving the sense of self. It is an expression of our uniquely human capacity to experience ourselves as subjects who are not swallowed up in our objective situation. It is the healthy way of feeling a 'distance' between one's self and the problem, a way of standing off and looking at one's problem with perspective. One cannot laugh when in an anxiety panic, for then one is swallowed up, one has lost the distinction between himself as subject and

[3] Hutschnecker, *op. cit,* p. 61.

> the object world around him. So as long as one can laugh, one is not completely under the domination of anxiety or fear.[4]

I've always believed that the best way to a man's (or woman's) heart is not through the stomach at all, but rather through the funny bone. It is truly in the funny things we do in all their embarrassing moments that we can put life in real perspective. I personally enjoy those corny stories that have at the heart of them the bitter-sweet vulnerability of life. These vignettes can often bring a tear as well as a laugh. Humor pronounces the reality that life is indeed crazy, and if the world is crazy then my craziness has been felt by others before. Hope is born when we realize others have survived; so perhaps can I. For what is hope if it is not a new perspective, or a new glimmer of what might be: a new vision that is yet unborn.

In April of 1976 Totie Fields, the comedienne, underwent surgery for the removal of her left leg. Within one year, and with the aid of an artificial limb, she was up and about ready to resume her career. When she was questioned about her successful recovery and her high spirits, she said,

> I see life a little differently now. I have a different set of values than I did before. I don't waste time on nonsense when I can see beauty in flowers, in trees, and in the faces of people around me. Laughing saves me too. If I took the amputation seriously, everyone around me would be sad. It's not too bad to lose a leg. I had two of them. But I only have one sense of humor to lose.[5]

Is There Enough Time?

Developing and following a strategy of intervention through the sharing of hope is going to take time. Some of the minutes used for content will have to be sacrificed. Yet, time spent intervening into the lives of students and beginning meaningful communication just might be the most important time a Chaplain or Director of Religious Education trainer spends. Carl Rogers said this about communication:

> I fall short of achieving real communication person-to-person all the time, but moving in this direction makes life for me a warm, exciting, upsetting, troubling, satisfying, enriching, and above all a worthwhile venture.[6]

Really, what would happen if the lesson plan was for an instant left behind and the skill was not taught to mastery in this session. Would it matter if all the material was not covered? A wonderful and joyous laugh, or a knowing tear might just be what makes all of this worthwhile.

[4] May, Rollo, *Man's Search for Himself*, W. W. Norton Company, New York, 1953, p. 61.

[5] Totie Fields quoted in: Forpe and McCollister, *The Sunshine Book*, Jonathan David Publishers, Inc., Middle Village, New York, 1979, p. 138.

[6] Forpe and McCollister, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

Proclaim the Hope That Is Within Us

What then can we say to the PFC with a wife and three children who has been required to attend a parenting class? What can we say to a young pregnant mother who when asked to say what is the most valuable thing in life said, "noninterference by government agencies"? Can religious education make any intervention in the cycle of cynicism, doubt and hopelessness found much too often in our soldiers and their families?

Yes it can. Yes, it must. The beginning is with us who have the opportunity to intervene with hope. Our hope is founded in our faith. The one thing that can inhibit our successful intervention is our own faithlessness which is betrayed by our own hopelessness. if we have lost the hope we and so many we come in contact with really need, we have fallen prey to the cynicism around us and our success is in question. Rev. Bob Slosser has a suggestion,

> Perhaps we indeed could learn from Jeremiah's word to the Babylonian exiles. 'Keep on living, doing everything we always have, increasing our numbers, working for the welfare of our fellowmen, participating in their problems and struggles, constantly asking God with our whole being, always aware that we like Abraham, are not permanent settlers, trusting that we have a future and a hope.' My eyes fell on a cluster of references in the margin of my Bible—*Jeremiah* 31:17. There is hope for the future, says the lord.' (RSV)[7]

Some have tried to instill hope based on the power of the human mind. Personality power and positive thinking are presented as the solution to every problem of life. While we ought to be concerned with our humanity and live with the understanding that we are each unique and special creatures of God, to place our hope only in ourselves is to set a course to failure.

The Story—A Hopeful Ending

The Director of Religious Education (DRE) did use the lesson plan that Thanksgiving Eve. But in his examples he spoke about people he had known and how their lives changed when they found new hope. The tomorrow that would come would be a tomorrow prepared in love. Pain might linger. Fear might continue, but tomorrow was secure waiting for something new and something beautiful to happen. He added a few humorous stories and tried to be as honest as he had ever been before. The class was presented. The small groups did their work and the two hours passed much like they had in the many other classes he had taught. When it was over they left; men and women, soldiers, and family members. The DRE knew that some would not have a bountiful Thanksgiving. A few stayed and asked for referrals. When they were all gone the DRE wondered if anyone had let any of it in. Would a new hope

[7] Slosser, Bob, *Catch the Spirit of Hope*, Thomas Nelson Publishing, Nashville, 1982, p. 23.

begin in one, even one, of these students? He left not knowing for sure, but with a renewed certainty in a future empowered by God's grace that made the birth of that new hope a real possibility.

"There IS Hope for the Future, says the Lord." (*Jeremiah* 31:17)

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The Catechumenate Process and the Parish Calendar

Thomas P. Sandi

The restoration of the Catechumenate, known as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, in the Roman Catholic Church, has generated much discussion, uncertainty and a host of pastoral opportunities for those willing to take on great responsibilities and challenges. Intentional, public initiation of new adult members into the Catholic Community requires a wider landscape than the slim RCIA ritual might suggest.[1] The call to conversion and empowerment for the entire believing community is a formidable one. It requires nothing less than a full, participative, long-range commitment of all pastoral leaders, and the leadership participation of the "average parishioner," without whom the process can become little more than "convert classes."[2]

That phrase, "convert classes," brings to mind a whole series of sights, sounds and scenarios. It wasn't very long ago that potential Catholics came to the rectory door for one-on-one instruction from the pastor. The four or five month discussions were often one-dimensional. Intellectual assimilation, spiced with just the right amount of popular

[1] The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) was published in Latin in 1972; it appeared in English translation in 1974 and was revised in 1988.—The mandatory date for implementation was September 1, 1988.

[2] "Besides what is explained in the General Introduction (no. 7), the people of God, represented by the local church, should always understand and show that the initiation of adults is its concern and the business of all the baptized." "Introduction" *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1974), no. 41.

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piety, was the principal goal of the private sessions.[3] The talks, though gentle enough, were filled with a mix of seriousness and a certain amount of excitement. Even before the RCIA provisional document was published in 1972, pastors and potential converts had an instinctive understanding of the profound step they were undertaking. The time would come for the "reception" and it was often carried out on a Saturday night, after the last confession rendered the church dark and hollow. The candidate's friends and family members, along with the pastor, served as the "welcoming committee," and in a matter of ten or fifteen minutes, the Church was enriched by a new member! This scenario sounds rather bizarre only if we forget that almost all baptisms were divorced from community interest, participation or celebration in the recent past. (Children were typically baptized on Sunday afternoons in a similarly darkened baptistery with a minimum number of onlookers.) Vatican II, which brought a new awakening and twenty years of renewal, has made quite an impression on us, especially in terms of what it means to be a Catholic, the initiation of a new member and the whole notion of Community responsibility. If we have no other reaction to the pre-Vatican II baptismal praxis, we are struck by its unnaturalness." [4]

The Restored Rite

More than anything else, the restored Catechumenate is a radical rediscovery of the church as pilgrim community of hospitality and nurturing family.[5] We have been presented in our day and age with a revolutionary model of church revival [6] and imagination. Of course, as often happens with families, the birth of a new member means house-

[3] "The catechumenate is not a mere expounding of doctrines and precepts, but a training period for the whole Christian life. It is an apprenticeship of appropriate length, during which disciples are joined to Christ, their Teacher." "Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church," *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter Abbott, ed. (New York: Guild Press 1966), no. 14.

[4] E. Waugh insightfully speaks of a recent convert, Rex, in a devastatingly realistic manner when he says of the worldly and scheming pragmatist, "In her long history the Church must have had some pretty queer converts. I don't suppose all Clovis's army were exactly Catholic-minded. One more won't hurt." E. Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* Boston: Little, Brown, 1945), p. 193.

[5] See M. Warren's superb description of the hospitality of the Irish kitchen in "The Catechumen in the Kitchen," *Religious Education and the Future*, Dermot Lane, ed. (Mahway, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986). Especially telling is his care for the disadvantaged and the social justice implications for a credible Catechumenate.

[6] Thomas P. Ivory has proposed this language of model quite convincingly basing his idea on Dulles' *Models of the Church* (1974). He explains, " . . . the church as the environment in which people hear the Good News of God's plan for them in Jesus Christ and in which believers are nurtured and formed in their faith and seek to live out their relationship with Christ in a Christian lifestyle." Thomas P. Ivory, The Catechumenate: Towards a New Model for the Church," *Christian Initiation Resources Reader*, Vol. II (New York: Sadlier, 1984).

cleaning, a reorganization of space, a reassessment of feelings, thoughts and responsibilities, and a new awareness of who we are as Christians,—what we are about (*Phil.* 2:5),—and how we are being supportive of, and faithful to that reality.[7]

Many would say that this model of church is by far the most radical, if least visible, outcome of "*aggiornamento.*" A carefully constructed guide for the process of evangelization and hospitality, [8] the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) can appear positively frightening because of its implied rejuvenation of and challenge to the whole Community of Believers in parishes and throughout the universal church.[9] It makes adult initiation the norm [10] and the yardstick against which sacramental life is to be measured. RCIA means uprootedness, the re-tilling and replanting of our entire notions about parish, community and a believer's stance before the Lord! What is needed here is strong faith in the "Planter" and the role we are privileged to play: "tenders of the inner rainbow" [11] of ministry and new life.

The process of becoming a Catholic, as envisioned by the Rite, involves more than just the preparation of converts for baptism,

[7] See Mark Searle, *Christening: The Making of Christians* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1980), p. 18, 19 for a pithy summary of the change of attitude that must accompany the revival of the Rites of Initiation. "The sacraments of Initiation . . . suppose the faith and the support of the individual's family and the wider family of the Church into whose life the Spirit is drawing the child" (p. 19).

[8] Michel Dujarier, in his benchmark volume on the rites of initiation, states quite clearly that " . . . the new Rite is not a recipe book to be followed to the letter; rather it is a guide, which of necessity demands creative adaptation if it is to be followed in spirit." Michel Dujarier, *The Rites of Christian Initiation* (New York: sai3lil3r, 1979), p.23.

[9] The whole community is called to resurrect the art of welcoming. See Ron Lewinski, "The Art of Welcoming," in *Resource Book for the RCIA*, William J. Reedy, gen. ed. (New York: Sadlier, 1988). He speaks convincingly of the importance of getting all parishioners involved in hospitality. He delineates four characteristics of the art of welcoming: listening, respecting, acquainting and freeing. (pp. 129-134). Also, see Regis Duffy, "A Word that will Rouse Them" in *On Becoming a Catholic* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984): "No Christian Community is excused from proclaiming the Word of God with conviction and credibility. This assertion is not based on rhetorical or theological skills of the ministers of God's Word nor on their personal merits. We proclaim and we hear God's Word within the very context that he alone can provide: his presence engraved in the stories of our lives" (p. 56-57).

[10] See Lise Holash, *Evangelization, the Catechumenate and Its Ministries* (Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1983). "The RCIA embodies very nearly the entire vision of the Church and the sacraments which were articulated by Vatican II. To put it bluntly, it blows the whistle on many theological presuppositions which have governed our Catholic religious lives for more than a millenium" (p. 37). The entire sixth chapter deals with the normative effect of the RCIA (pp. 37-42).

[11] Kathleen Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983), p. 153. Her work on the imagination and the Christian life is a rare treat, dealing with a modern day struggle for a freer faith experience. See her last chapter, "Imagination and the Ministry" for a discussion on the importance of imagination in reaching the Christian mystery.

confession and communion, as had been the case for Centuries.[12] The *Community* must choose to change and regenerate itself. Members need to re-examine what Bernard Lonergan calls their "originating value,"[13] as they take a personal, active and enthusiastic role in greeting and nurturing new members.[14] In taking this radical step, the community must commit itself to a new and invigorating self-assessment. The parish should begin to see itself as "catechist!"[15] The care and feeding of catechumens must be preceded by a renewed interest in becoming a more spiritually and psychologically fit Body. Support for one another is a serious and long-ranged effort that demands time and space in each parishioner's life.[16] Sharing the Good News "en route" has to move beyond intellectual stimulation and repetition of appropriated ideas about the faith to existential Christianity.[17] The adult call to conversion and "the Way" of Jesus, according to the Catholic tradition, has historically involved a journey:[18] scriptural and catechetical formation, personal prayer and liturgical celebration, participation in "apostolic activities," and most importantly, experience of the local faith community as hospitable and generative.[19] In its revived form, the RCIA involves a pilgrimage, an "entering into the mystery of Death and Resurrection, and the experiencing of the Good News."[20] Believers are to

[12] Duffy states that " . . . the catechumenal process invites people to hear and see reality with God's ears and eyes. The biblical image of conversion as a 'walk' captures the change in such listeners to God's Word. They should all walk in a new way, having heard God's message and seen his future, the Kingdom" Duffy, *On Becoming*, p. 45. For an insightful discussion of the radical change in initiation processes, see Gerard Weber, "Nothing Will Ever Be the Same Again," in *Christian Initiation Resources*, pp. 99-105, esp. 104, 105.

[13] Ibid., p.24.

[14] See Duffy's third chapter which deals with "honorable intentions of the welcoming community. Duffy, p. 61-83. Especially helpful are his remarks about the liturgy and accountability.

[15] Richard Ling coined this phrase, emphasizing the witness value of one-on-one catechesis. Richard Ling, "The Catechumenate," in *Christian Initiation Resources*, Vol. II, pp. 50-59.

[16] Lane speaks of a "ministry of credibility" in the catechesis that takes place in the framework of ministry. Lane, *Religious Education*, p. 75f. Demetrius Dumm deals with the impossibility of making the faith journey alone or quickly. Demetrius Dumm, *Flowers in the Desert* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 109-132, esp. his uncovering of the meaning of 1 *Corinthians* 12:31—13:13.

[17] "The mature catechumens should have the intention of arriving at an intimate knowledge of Christ and his Church, and they are expected to progress in sincere self-knowledge in a serious appraisal of self, and in true penance." *Rite*, no. 155.

[18] For a brief history of the Catechumenate see Searle, pp. 1-19. The "breakup" of the Catechumenate is sketched very well (pp. 13-17).

[19] Tertullian speaks to the issue of generativity when he remarks, "Christians are made not born." Tertullian, *Apologia*, xviii.

[20] See Dunn's spirituality of the passion. Dumm, *Flowers*, 151, 152.

call persons gently to "enter into paradox by embodying it more genuinely in our own lives."[21]

Two related issues are addressed by the RCIA: renewal of parish identity and the reception of new members into the Community of Believers.[22] This essay deals with the latter issue, presuming that the idea of renewal has taken hold among parishioners, and that they desire others to see and hear God's Word through their lived Christianity. Initiation works well only when the Community of Faith has been adequately led to embrace the reality of natural and continuing growth in its Body. The conversion process, with its biblical underpinnings and sociological implications needs to be carefully studied and appropriated over a suitably lengthy period of time.[23] As we are speaking of the Church as a living organism, this should be seen as something central to successful, ongoing parish development.[24] A committed RCIA team should have been gathered, formed, and sealed with a sense of mission and hospitality garnered from Gospel experience and Spirit-centered living.[25] The pastor and pastoral team must be at the center of this process of preparation, for without their participation and leadership, the process that is Christian Initiation will not work or, worse, will be relegated to "just another program!" status.[26]

[21] Fischer, p. 166.

[22] Robert Duggan lists five different types of conversion: religious, Christian, ecclesial, moral and intellectual. He explains that the process that we refer to as "conversion" really includes moving from one to another of these types. Duggan, *Conversion*, pp. 111-117.

[23] There is no distinct, focused doctrine of conversion in the Scriptures. See Michael Dick, "Conversion in the Bible," in Robert Duggan, *Conversion*, pp.43-63. Dick's explanation of the word that John uses in his Gospel ("believe) for the conversion process centers around the commitment Jesus required of his disciples—beyond ideology to personal relationship.

[24] Thomas Sweetser and his team at the Parish Evaluation Project in Chicago have noted certain common ingredients in successful parishes. The six planning ingredients are the listening process, the formulation of short-ranged, achievable goals, learning how to dream, leaving room for the Spirit, acting as a model community and providing the right atmosphere in the parish. The contribution that RCIA can make to these ingredients is immeasurable. Thomas Sweetser, *Successful Parishes* (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1983), p. 9f.

[25] Joseph McCormick outlines a masterful plan for the building of a team based on his pastoral experience with a parish that had just completed its third semester of RENEW. His imagery of "planting and harvesting" is engaging. Joseph McCormick, "Building a Catechumenate Team," in *Resource Book for the RCIA*, pp. 59-65. See also Lise Holash, *Evangelization, The Catechumenate and Its Ministries* (Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown, Co., 1983), pp. 59-63.

[26] See the *Rite*, no. 45 for remarks about the importance of ministering to the catechumens as a team.

The Parish Calendar

At the heart of the individual initiation process is time.[27] Persons who seek to join our fellowship need to have a sufficient period of inquiry to discover for themselves what we already know and love about the Faith and our Community. Inquirers must gently and honestly come face to face with their motivation for Conversion.[28] If we are to avoid reducing a healthy process to "program" status, it is imperative that we have an open-ended approach to the RCIA—one that respects the growth process and the sensibilities of individuals. This cannot be stated too strongly, for the RCIA was envisioned as a powerful tool of inner growth and development.

Interestingly, this respect for time is what often puts off many pastors (trained in a different era of theology), pastoral teams, and, because of their negative projections, inquirers.[29] A more realistically, calendar-sensitive approach for this malleable Rite, appears to be called for—one that takes into account the praxis of today's American society and church and yet remains faithful to the Rite. As a result, we might bring about more meaningful spiritual advances in parishes that would not ordinarily embrace this process.[30] (Recall the confusion and resentment that was caused by the poorly explained introduction of the missal of Paul VI in 1970!) We are not suggesting that the RCIA process be "fitted into" a parish year; that is impossible. Rather, we propose that those who manage the RCIA process be sensitive to certain cycles and

[27] "The period of time suitable for the catechumenate depends on the grace of God and on various circumstances, such as the plan of instruction to be given, the number of catechists, deacons, and priests, the cooperation of individual catechumens, the means necessary reach the place of the catechumenate and to live there, and the help of the local community. *Nothing can be predetermined a priori.* (my emphasis) *Rite*, no. 20. See also no. 98 of the *Rite* concerning "sufficient maturity" for conversion.

[28] Dean Hoge delineates three types of converts: the inter-marriage convert, the family life convert and the seeker convert. His tables are especially significant *vis-a-vis* his research findings; the case studies add a realistic quality to his facts and figures. Hoge, *Converts*, pp. 43-71.

[29] Ronald Amandolare suggests through his "interview" article that encouragement of all concerned in the formation of an RCIA process is the key. Robert Amandolare, "Getting a Catechumenate Underway: A Dialogue of Encouragement," in *Christian Initiation Resources Reader*, Vol. 1, pp. 30-42.

[30] I agree with Mary Malone that "It cannot be said often enough that the RCIA must not be and cannot be squeezed into a school year structure *arbitrarily*. The time and the rhythm of the RCIA process is determined by one thing and one thing only—the deepening faith of the candidate. Conversion cannot be programmed or rushed to suit our calendars. The Holy Spirit does not seem to be aware of our semester system. *Nevertheless for parishes to function*, some planning is necessary and this is especially so at the beginning of the process." Mary T. Malone, *Step by Step: A Handbook for the RCIA* (Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1986, p. 4.)

phases that are characteristic of American Catholic parishes when planning the yearly calendar.[31]

Assumptions

This proposal for a yearly parish RCIA calendar is based on some sociological and psychological realities:

1. *The ten-month school year generally "regulates" the lives of families, churches and society at large.* Labor Day and Memorial Day serve as guides for our work. July and August are generally recognized by a vast majority of Americans and businesses as "vacation time," although alterations are not uncommon. During the summer months, other than broad planning, not very much can happen in a typical parish due to vacations and plain fatigue.

2. *Persons in any society need to see closure as a part of any experience that demands intensity and commitment.* We seem to be sensitive to this human need in many of our ecclesial undertakings, but rather close-mouthed and paralyzed when we talk about formatting the RCIA.

3. *Burnout is a real possibility for a team that cannot look forward to a reasonably well managed, adaptable process.* The care and feeding of teams touches on a whole other discussion not germaine to this essay.

4. *The work of the Spirit vis-a-vis catechumens will not be stifled.* The one-year plan takes into account that persons grow at different paces and that no calendar can structure genuine stages of maturity. Persons may enter the process at any time of the year aided by the ancillary team, although Easter/Pentecost remains the ordinary time for the celebration of the Sacraments.[32] This is a flexible structure, but a structure nonetheless.

5. *Many in our culture have already been exposed to Christianity, our ways of worship and our fellowship in the Catholic Community.* Oftentimes, spouses have been accompanied by their non-Catholic mates for years before full initiation is sought. To suggest that they have not yet "heard the Gospel," which is one of the main focus of conversion, is demeaning.

6. *The RCIA was primarily envisioned as something that would be used by missionaries in their work among non-Christians.* It was at their request that the restoration of the Catechumenate was

[31] Other calendars with which we are familiar are the liturgical, civil, fiscal to name a few.

[32] We are not speaking about structuring the maturation process here, just the parish calendar. Growth—slow and deliberate must be reckoned with and cared for. See *Rite* 20.

accomplished.[33] The Rite is just coming to terms (literally) with those who have already been baptized. In fact, most of our American "catechumens" are not that at all; they are more often Christians who come to us from a variety of denominations: "candidates" for admission to the Catholic community.

An intensive, one-year parish calendar incorporating parts of the Catechumenate periods seems to be a realistic possibility and, furthermore, a desirable management tool for the initiation process in American parishes. This proposal[34] requires a strong RCIA Team, composed of the Director, the DRE, the pastor, catechists and a liturgist, as well as two ancillary teams composed of a spiritual director, a social chair, a children's program director, a field experience director and an evangelist. The Team would have responsibility for the entire process, with an agreed-upon length of tenure, perhaps three to five years. The ancillary teams would work closely with the Team, each serving one year terms. Team A would work for a given eleven-month period as the primary responsible agent of the team, and Team B would act as a "back-up," taking care of the informal evangelizing aspect of the Pre-Catechumenate, especially for those who enter the process at a time other than that proposed in the calendar order. In addition, Team B would be responsible for the formal training of the parish sponsors and godparents for a two-month period, during the spring/summer months. Any member of the "B" team who wishes to assist the current team for a given year may do so, but in a secondary role.

The Catechumenate Periods

Once assembled and poised for action, the Team would begin the process using Jesus' own praxis as a model.[35] The Pre-Catechumenate always takes place in small groups, in a very informal manner. *There is no calendar for the Pre-Catechumenate!* Oftentimes, one-on-one sessions work better *at this stage*, so that no public pressure seems to be placed on the inquirer to "make a decision." The ancillary team would function in

[33] See *Rite* no. 2 and the "Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church" *Documents of Vatican II*, no. 14. "The catechumenate is an apprenticeship of appropriate length, during which disciples are joined to Christ, their Teacher." See also Duffy, *On Becoming*, p. 154: "Long years of preparation do not automatically ensure individual or community fidelity to being the Body of Christ:" He is speaking here of penance *vis-a-vis* the catechumenate process absence in our time.

[34] See Appendix for proposal sketch.

[35] See Thomas Groome's "hints" from the praxis of Jesus. Thomas Groome, "Shared Praxis: An 'Ordinary' Approach to Evangelization," in *Catholic Evangelization Today* (Mahway, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986) p. 150ff. Also Mary Malone's outline for the birthing of a process is enlightening (parish renewal, assembling a Team, reading of the document, recruitment, establishing a calendar, deciding about parish communication, evaluation, preparing for inevitable expansion of process and comparing notes) Malone, pp. 2-4.

a non-threatening manner whenever the inquirer desires assistance on his/her journey. Once a group has been formed, weekly meetings would begin in September and the formal entrance into the Catechumenate would be celebrated with the appropriate liturgy on the First Sunday of Advent. Using this pattern, the catechumens have a minimum of five months to be formally exposed to our way of life and teachings prior to beginning of Lent.

The Enlightenment period begins with the First Sunday of Lent and the sessions here stress readiness for the celebration of the Easter Sacraments. Five weeks are set aside for this purification. The Easter Vigil is celebrated with all the Elect "surrounded by a cloud of witnesses" (*Heb.* 12:1)—the saints who preceded these pilgrims as well as those who are still making the journey on earth.

The Mystagogia period would include a two-week break in the sessions for a proper Easter celebration, and then five Sunday sessions, concentrating on the "sharing of the Mysteries." This would also include a quiet time for the neophytes to be more comfortably woven into the Community fabric. The Pentecost Liturgy brings the "year" to a close, with the call to mission being made personal for the new Catholics. (June is set aside as a "re-creation" time for all).

Strengths and Criticisms

Strengths associated with a one-year RCIA calendar are many. Pastors and RCIA teams would be more open to discovering the Rite and the possibilities it offers their parish. In addition, inquirers would feel that the process is not only manageable but also attractive because, although limits are unbounded in individual journeys of faith, there is a clear, yearly terminus to the parish process each year. Participants can feel assured that the process is relatively anchored in quality time for the proper assimilation of Christian virtues and Catholic teachings, because we live in a very mobile society, filled with more options for study, recreation and diversions than any one person can choose. The possibility of burnout for Team members will be avoided, and the rotation of the ancillary teams assures them of their worth, for it respects their time, talents and treasures—all precious gifts.

Criticisms that may be raised to this proposal probably would be centered around the recognized fact that no boundaries can ever be set for the conversion process. Initiation, if taken as a serious and life-affirming process, takes time and long-range commitments. Another draw back that might be cited is the fact that the RCIA might more easily degenerate into "glorified convert classes." Even the *appearance* of constraining the process into a school year is given.

In this brief essay, I have suggested an outline (and *only* an outline) for an intensive, yearly parish Catechumenate calendar. Teams might function more effectively within this scenario, knowing they participate in one of the most humbling and rewarding experiences of the

Christian Way: the demonstration of his/her simple faith praxis[35] that others might "come to know God" for themselves, through personal example. S/He can joyfully claim for her/himself Paul's own "motto," "I have been crucified with Christ, and yet, I am alive; yet, it is no longer I, but Christ living within me" (Gal 2:20).

Appendix

A Proposed Yearly Parish Catechumenate Calendar

Pre-Catechumenate takes place in informal groups throughout the year. The preferred time for this evangelization is the summer.

Catechumenate is begun before the formal Entrance into the Order of Catechumens (Advent I) in September and lasts until just before the Lenten season begins.

Enlightenment takes place during Lent (February/March through March/April) until the Triduum.

Mystagogia takes place during five of the seven weeks of the Easter season (April/May through May/June) to include Pentecost.

The weekly schedule would include five and a half hours of learning in a variety of settings:

1. Sunday sessions: Three hours with family breakfast, Liturgy and class based on the Lectionary theme.*
2. Weeknight sessions: Two and-a-half hours with classroom study and social time. A Tuesday or a Wednesday meeting is usually ideal because it avoids long week-end cancellations. (These sessions would be eliminated after the celebrations of the Easter Sacraments.)

**Breaking Open the Word of God* by Karen Hinman *et. al.* is especially helpful in this Lectionary-based study and reflection. Available from Paulist Press in three volumes.

Family-Centered Intergenerational Religious Education: Families Minister to Families

Bridget M. Meehan

The Family in Contemporary American Society

Today the American family experiences a variety of opportunities and challenges. Contemporary society itself brings to the family great pressures and changes. Among the opportunities and challenges that families face, the following have been observed by social scientists and family life experts:

—Since the American Revolution, families in America have experienced the most widespread period of social change in the history of humankind. As American society transitioned from agricultural to an industrial to a technological society, families have adjusted and have proven they are here to stay.[1]

—According to public opinion polls, the majority of Americans consider marriage and family life to be the most important part of their lives.[2]

[1] M. J. Bane, *Here to Stay: American Families in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

[2] G. Gallup, *American Families—1980* (Princeton, N.J.: The Gallup Organization, 1980); and G. Gallup, "Attitudes of the U.S. toward Marriage and the Family," Testimony before U.S. Senate Subcommittee, 1983)

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—People across the country have expressed a new interest in marriage enrichment, parenting education, natural family planning and family spirituality. One example of this is the involvement of married couples in the preparation of engaged couples in church sponsored programs throughout the United States.[3]

—Since the majority of women are employed in the work force today, fathers' and mothers' roles have become more flexible as men and women adjust and negotiate family responsibilities. In 1985, 48% of mothers with infants under one year of age worked outside the home at least-part time. This figure increases to over 70% of mothers with school age children. The issue of how to balance family life and work affects the majority of Americans and impacts on all religious, racial, economic, gender and political groups.[4]

—During the past twenty years information about natural methods of family planning has become more widely known. Scientific studies and advances in fertility awareness have supported the reliability of the various methods. The number of couples who successfully use this method is steadily increasing.

—If recent rates persist, at least one out of three first marriages begun this year will terminate in divorce. If remarriages are included, which are currently failing at a slightly higher rate than first marriages, one out of two marriages entered this year will end in divorce.

—By 1995, the combined total of single-parent and remarried families will outnumber the number of never-divorced two-parent families in the United States. Nearly 25% of U.S. children currently live in a single-parent household, due to separation, divorce, out-of-wedlock births, and the death of a parent; more than 60% will do so before they complete high school.

The Church's Role

Where is the Church in this time when the American family faces such fundamental challenges and what is its role? The Church's place in society is to bring the good news of the Gospel to all people, enabling them to experience the power of God's presence dynamically alive in all the relationships and events of contemporary life. The Church's role is to reflect the light of Christ to all humanity. The Second Vatican Council and Pope John Paul II have articulated a vision of the family in which

[3] D. O'Rourke, et at., *Preparing for Marriage: A Study of Marriage Preparations in American Catholic Dioceses* (St. Meinrad, Ind: Abbey Press, 1983).

[4] Any family statistics and trends listed in these observations where citations are not provided are taken from S. Preister, "Contemporary American Families: Facts and Fables" (Washington, D.C.: The National Center for Family Studies at the Catholic University of America, 1985); and S. Preister, "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the United States, and Application to American Catholics" in *Catholic Remarriage: Pastoral Issues and Preparation Models* (Mahway, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1986).

the family takes on a special role as the basic foundation of the Church and society.

The Family as Domestic Church

The Church's vision of family is rooted in Scripture and based on the convenantal love of Jesus Christ. This vision proclaims that the family "constitutes a special revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason too, (the family) can and should be called the domestic church."[5] The family as an intimate community of persons bound together by blood, marriage, or adoption has a unique identity. It is not a collection of individuals, but a developing system whose members are vitally interconnected. This community is demonstrated in mutual self-giving by the members of the family throughout its life together. It calls for a permanent love among all family members, based on the equality and mutuality of husband and wife. According to this vision the family does not simply resemble the Church, but the family is truly Church. Karl Rahner wrote, "The Church becomes present in marriage: marriage is really the smallest community of the redeemed and sanctified . . . hence, it is truly the smallest church."[6]

The Fathers of Vatican II revived the concept of family as the domestic Church, (Gaudium et Spes, 11,48) a concept rooted in Scripture, Judaism, and the traditions of the early Church. The earliest Christians were converts from Judaism, and the center of Jewish religious life (particularly after the destruction of the temple A.D. 70) was the home, not the synagogue. So it makes sense that the early Jewish Christians would hold family life in the highest esteem.

The Acts of the Apostles and the letters of St. Paul reflect positive attitudes toward family life that must have been so common as to have simply been taken for granted. "The household," writes scripture scholars Elisabeth and Lousi Tetlow, "was the basic unit of the Christian community in the first century. It was the household, the family, that heard and accepted, lived and taught, the Gospel of Jesus."

As early as the late fourth century, St. John Chrysostom named the family ecclesia, and consistent with this ancient teaching, in the late nineteenth century, Pope Leo XIII called the family "the first form of the church on earth."[7]

Developing a Family Spirituality

This insight about the family as the domestic church is an important one. As a basic community of believing persons, bound in love to one

[5] Famaliaris Consortio, 21

[6] Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 421.

[7] M. Finley, "Family Orphaned by the Church" in National Catholic Reporter (Kansas City, Mo. February 28, 1986):11-12.

another, the family is the arena in which the dying and rising of Christ is lived out on a daily basis. Here, the experience of sin, hurt, reconciliation, and healing occur again and again. In the church of the home the hungry are fed; the thirsty are given drink; the sick are visited; the prisoners are set free; the naked are clothed; the ignorant are instructed; the alienated are forgiven; the wounded are healed. The family, the place where "two or three are gathered" in the Lord's name is a community of life and love. It educates and fosters the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth of its members. In its own way it is a living reflection of the mystery of the Church. The family as domestic church manifests the fulfillment of the Lord's command to love one another.

The ordinary activities and experience of family life are holy and reveal the sacred. God is revealed in our humaness—in what is everyday and ordinary. By rediscovering the holiness of everyday life, by fostering an openess to the wonder of human living, the personal experiences which make up the everyday lives of families are affirmed and made sacred. This is the core of what we mean by fostering a family spirituality.

As domestic church, families bless one another, light candles, break bread together, welcome guests, admit wrongs, forgive injuries, care for the sick, demonstrate compassion, celebrate the joys and sorrows of life. Birth, childhood, growth, marriage, work, unemployment, sickness loss, and death are but a few of the human events that provide opportunities to share faith and celebrate the presence of God. Each relationship and activity is a potential sacred encounter with the divine that touches the God of love at the heart of family living.

The Family Meal

The family meal is one example of the holy in the ordinary, and an opportunity to celebrate intimacy with God by first experiencing this intimacy with one another. In the sharing of ordinary food and conversation, the sacred is revealed. We encounter the presence of God at home in the beauty of a well-planned meal, in the table set with care, the family gathered together in love, in delicious food which nourishes all our senses. As the family shares openly and honestly their joys and sorrows, they feed one another physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Moments of profound self-disclosure, times in which the depths of communion can be expressed happen around the family table. These occasions can be opportunities of tremendous growth for the family as they experience the depths of their oneness with one another in Christ. Present to one another as the Body of Christ, family members are present to God. Children and parents together around the family table experience the nurturing symbolism of food in the meal they share as family. The family, as a result, may experience a deeper dimension of Eucharist as divine nourishment. God nurtures us by giving Jesus as

food. Through the sharing of a family meal family members bless, encourage, accept and love one another. There is a power present when the family prays together around the family table in thanksgiving for God's blessings on every area of their lives. Through the sharing of a meal, the family celebrates the presence of God through each person. At this table both human and spiritual growth take place as the sacred is experienced in the ordinary.

Having acknowledged the necessity of a family spirituality and the importance of nuturing faith in the domestic church, how does the Christian community provide resources and working models for family spiritual growth to take place? There are perhaps a variety of possibilities to choose from, but I would like to recommend one: Family-Centered Intergenerational Religious Education (FIRE).[8]

Family-Centered Intergenerational Religious Education: A New Approach

Family-Centered Intergenerational Religious Education (FIRE) is a new approach, an alternative model of religious education that covers in a four year cycle the truths of the faith listed in the National Catechetical Directory. The basic unit of FIRE is the home group, an intergenerational cluster consisting of five to eight "families" or households. Singles, seniors, couples without children, one and two parent families also participate. The home group meets sixteen times a year (a pre-Advent segment, a Lenten segment, and an Easter segment) for lessons that combine solid pedagogy with an experiential, inductive approach that is fun and exciting for all ages. While the major emphasis is on communicating the faith story, much attention is given to creating prayerful support communities where that faith can be lived out, and to developing effective communication, affirmation and decision-making skills within family or household groups.

Liturgical or paraliturgical celebrations, for all the small groups in a parish, occur at the beginning and conclusion of each segment. Two large group socials are recommended to bring the family groups together to give the participants a sense of the larger community and a broader dimension to the experience of church. A background session provides adult participants with an overview of the theology underlying the home lessons.

Fort Myer's Experience

In our parish at Fort Myer, we introduced and adapted FIRE to meet the needs of our unique Christian community. Our families chose to meet at

[8] Family Centered Intergenerational Religious Education (FIRE) is a new approach to family catechesis developed by Dr. Kathleen Chesto. It is published by Sheed and Ward: P.O. Box 419281, Kansas City, Missouri 64141.

the chapel social hall on Sundays after the 9:30 a.m. Mass instead of in the homes. Some of the benefits observed by our Catholic pastor, Chaplain (COL) Walter Montondon, members of the FIRE community, and myself are:

1) Parents have reclaimed their role as the primary religious educators of their children. FIRE equips parents to pass on to their children the rich heritage of their faith in creative and innovative ways.

2) FIRE presents a more integrated approach to religious education. It provides a supportive structure and explanation for an experience that children have each day living as part of a faith-filled family. Family members are given opportunities to reflect together on the meaning and practice of their faith in all aspects of their lives.

3) Parents who have not been practicing their faith are now returning to the sacraments. Couples involved in invalid marriages have sought the Church's blessing on their marriages.

4) The families in the FIRE community are forming a supportive community of faith as they share their lives with one another. They have formed relationships and networks of support that far exceed the expectations of any chapel program.

5) This FIRE community has developed social action projects and outreaches to the enlisted military families stationed at Fort Myer. They have become a shining light of God's love to the entire military community.

6) The FIRE families have taken an active role in liturgical celebrations by preparing the altar. A designated family "sets the table" at the preparation of the gifts each Sunday. This involves processing up with the bread and wine, placing these gifts on the altar, placing the sacramentary, the water, chalice and purificators on the altar.

7) The FIRE families pray together at each session and support one another throughout the week by promising to pray for each other during the week. One way they have done this is by selecting a different family's name each Sunday to take home and keep in prayer.

8) The FIRE families have developed a sense of team ministry. Each of the family groups consists of three to eight families who take turns presenting the different topics each Sunday morning. Sometimes two couples or a single parent and a couple will join together to present a session. As a result of their enthusiasm the original "team" has expanded to include more families in the Sunday presentations.

9) FIRE provides single parent families with a built-in support system. Since the Intergenerational approach welcomes everyone: singles and seniors, single parent and two parent families, we have observed that FIRE provides a more inclusive model of Christian community in which individual gifts can be affirmed and differences respected.

10) The FIRE families form a community of seekers searching together for God's directions and sharing God's responses to the questions and are challenges in their lives. Adult education and spiritual

development an important part of our program. At a recent meeting participants in our FIRE program shared their desire for a deeper understanding of their faith. It was a moving experience for our pastoral team to listen to these parents share their love for the Eucharist and their desire to "pass on" this faith to their children as they prepare for first Communion.

11) As a result of FIRE and the increased opportunities to celebrate the sacraments, families are realizing that there is more to baptism (a commitment to live the Faith) than just a ceremony to "take away Original Sin!"

Conclusion

Our Family Intergenerational Religious Education (FIRE) program has given our families an opportunity to be ministers to themselves and to other families. Recent church documents such as the *Plan of Pastoral Action for Family Ministry and Familiaris Consortio* encourage this approach of families with similar life experiences supporting and ministering to each other in effective and enriching ways.[9] As our families have come together to share their stories and to minister to one another, young and old, singles, one- and two-parent families, they form a vibrant, intergenerational, caring Christian community that focuses on the spiritual development of all its members in every aspect of their lives. At Fort Myer the FIRE program has provided us with the resource weneeded to initiate this new, innovative model of religious education which has become a blessing for the entire military community.

[9] *A Family Perspective in Church and Society* published by Ad Hoc Committee on Marriage and Family Life, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, p. 14.

The Twin Roles of the DRE: Directing and Enabling

Sheryl L. Jeffery

Directing the Religious Education Program: Conflicting Visions

The purpose of this article is to give a broader understanding of what a Director of Religious Education could or should be doing, with a particular focus on his/her task as an enabler of others. The unwritten but understood job description of a Director of Religious Education gives the twin responsibilities of directing the total religious education program and enabling others to discover and utilize their gifts within the framework of that program to the DRE. Difficulty will often arise when the DRE's supervisor operates within a different framework with expectations that are incongruent or even incompatible with the primary foci of directing and enabling. Dr. Howard Hanchey provides the fundamental reason explaining these conflicting expectations. He states: "Rarely, in most seminaries (looking across denominational lines), is Christian education considered a central ministry of the Church. Of course there are exceptions, like the Center for the Ministry of Teaching at the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia, but generally Christian-education course work is elective at best. At worst it is neither valued nor offered. Even when the subject is not neglected, it is taught more as cold theory than as vital opportunity. . ."[1] When the supervisory chaplains have had little or no formal preparation in Christian education, it is not surprising that there are differing, even conflicting, role expectations for a DRE. These two visions of Christian education

[1] *Creative Christian Education: Teaching the Bible Through the Church Year* by Dr. Howard Hanchey, Morehouse-Barlow, 1986, pages 5-6.

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are vastly different. The chaplain's vision is often limited to the formal instruction periods of Sunday School/CCD, youth groups, teacher training and a library to support those activities. The DRE's vision is broader, encompassing more aspects of individual, family, and community life. This conflict of vision is usually present when the supervisory chaplain treats the DRE as a Sunday School Superintendent. The unspoken belief is that the DRE isn't really necessary because the Sunday School only meets on Sundays. This mindset is as accurate or as false as the statement that a chaplain only words on Sunday—because that is when he preaches!

What Does a DRE Do?

The Director of Religious Education has the primary function of assisting the installation Chaplain in providing for the total religious education program of an installation. This can be an awesome, not to mention time-consuming, responsibility. When this is coupled with the belief of some supervisors that the DRE should personally run every program, ministry effectiveness often decreases. The most effective way to maximize your own ministry is not by running everything but by encouraging others to discover and develop their ministries. The DRE handles these job responsibilities in a manner similar to the way the Staff Chaplain (Post Chaplain, Installation Chaplain) handles his/her responsibilities. The Staff Chaplain is responsible for the total religious program of the post. S/he cannot preach in every chapel every Sunday, conduct all of the field services, counsel all of those requesting counseling, accomplish the total ministry of the family life center, attend to budgeting and staff needs, visit those in the hospital, etc. No one expects the Staff Chaplain to accomplish these necessary tasks single handedly. Instead, s/he has a primary staff of chaplains who oversee and coordinate specific aspects of the total religious program. Each member of the primary staff performs some of the tasks within their purview and recruits, trains, and/or supervises others who perform the remaining tasks. The DRE should not be the leader of a team of horses, but should be the rider at the back, holding the reins and guiding the pack in front.

The DRE: A Member of the Primary Staff

The DRE should be a member of the Staff Chaplain's primary staff, with responsibility for religious education. Some tasks they will personally accomplish. Other tasks should be delegated. The DRE then recruits, trains, and supervises the persons accomplishing these tasks. Just as the Staff Chaplain cannot and should not personally run every facet of the installation's religious program, neither should the DRE be expected to personally run every religious education program. The DRE should have a "finger in every pie" but not a whole hand! To insist or require that the DRE personally run any or all religious education programs will

eliminate the flexibility needed to provide a dynamic religious education program that meets the needs of the installation. This flexibility is essential for transient communities like ours where not only do the personnel change but the leadership as well!

The DRE is planner and designer of the religious education program. Functioning as the director, it is the DRE's responsibility to be aware of the community needs and then to design, develop, and/or modify programs to meet those expressed needs. Recruiting, staffing, and training leaders for those programs is also the DRE's responsibility as is logistical support, budgeting, and evaluation.

The DRE: Enabler of Others

One of the most important and time consuming functions of the DRE is to be an enabler of others. Enabling others to discover their gifts requires listening to their goals, their frustrations, and their fears of failure. It requires an objective appraisal of their existing skills, their potential and their willingness to try something new. They may need coaxing and an honest reassurance of their ability. One of the prime factors motivating volunteers is the desire to be involved with something worthwhile, to make a difference, to contribute. Accurate matching of interests with talents and needs requires absolute honesty from the DRE.

Encouraging others to discover their ministries does not mean persuading them to fill your vacancies. " . . . the high calling of ministry in the church is missed when a sense of guilt is utilized to convince a person to help save an institutional resource or program."[2] Human resources may be scarce in your community, or mismatched to the available jobs and tasks. But you may be able to tailor existing programs/job descriptions to create a perfect fit. You may need to develop a new program/job description to fit capabilities and aspirations.

When you treat your volunteers and their skills with respect, there are likely to be three results. The first result is a volunteer who feels like a valued and contributing member of the religious education team. The second result is a volunteer committed to excellence. The third result is a vibrant, dynamic religious education ministry enhanced by the skills and talents of many. This participative form of religious education ministry is like the pearl of great price, lustrous with many colors, each color emerging from the one before and merging with the one which follows. Each color alone can not create the shimmering lustre that all of the colors together create. So too, our ministries have a common source and a shared focus, though no two ministries are exactly the same just as no two colors are identical shades. The sum effect of all of our ministries together is more than any one ministry alone.

[2] *A Ministry Manager's Handbook* by the U.S. Army Chaplain's Board, page 10.

Volunteers are as different as DREs. A volunteer's skills will fall on a continuum from non-existent to professional. Those with few skills to share bring their desire and willingness to participate in the religious education adventure. Others bring both skills and experience to share. As an enabler of shared ministries, the DRE has much to offer. To one, we offer preliminary training and self-confidence. To the other we provide opportunities to share their expertise. To all we provide encouragement to grow, on-going training, and supervision. "Training and supervision are the fulfillment and completion of the commitments made from the job description at the volunteer interview. Each is a way of supporting the volunteer and is unique to each program and perhaps even to each volunteer."[3] As *Ecclesiastes* 4:9-10 states: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." We need each other.

Effective Volunteer Ministry

An effective volunteer ministry (ours to them, theirs to the community, and theirs to us) requires the DRE's commitment. We are partners in the body of Christ. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (I *Corinthians* 12:4-6). Each possesses complementary gifts, not competing ministries. As Locke E. Bowman states: "There just cannot be, in religious education circles, an abounding notion that the professional has a corner on the wisdom. Wisdom comes in many forms, and some of it resides in each of us. Our task, which we all engage in together, is that of identifying one another's gifts—and then supporting each person in the development and use of those talents and skills. There is room for us all."[4] Warren S. Benson speaks of the enabling role of the DRE in more specific terms. "This is a part of the 'work of the ministry' that *Ephesians* 4:12 is stressing. As they are participating and utilizing their spiritual gifts they become fulfilled disciples. Directors of Christian Education and other professional staff people are there as 'playing coaches'. They should not do what the laity themselves can do. Professionals are to be enablers, facilitators, and developers of the people. Churches that fail to employ the skills and strengths of their members will languish and become increasingly effete."[5]

Enabling other to develop their ministries maximizes the DRE's ministry by expanding his spheres of influence. Enabled volunteers permit her to be many places simultaneously. This allows for maximum

[3] *Ibid.* p. 3.

[4] "Challenges Facing the Churches: What Would Happen If. . .? An Episcopal Perspective" by Locke E. Bowman in *Does the Church Really Want Religious Education?* Marlene Mayr, ed., Religious Education Press, 1988.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 3.

involvement of others in ministry and fosters diversity of programs. An effective DRE is like the dandelion turned to fluff. A good wind (or puff of breath) and the seeds are scattered in many directions. How they grow and flourish! They do not compete for space. They cooperate, though unknowingly, to broadcast their message: "Dandelions forever!" to every corner of their world. Volunteers who have been enabled and encouraged to grow, mature and produce "seeds". Their ministries can become like dandelions, flourishing everywhere. The results of nurturing care touches the lives of many others for many years and in many places.

Enabling others in their ministries allows the DRE to concentrate on the areas of his/her own ministry where it is most effective. Some DREs are innately gifted enablers. Others have practiced and learned the necessary skills. Think back to those persons who have had a significant impact upon your career choice and development. Were you nurtured or only tolerated? Were you encouraged to experiment or were your attempts and experiments sabotaged with doubts? Were you praised or were you belittled? The time honored principle underlying effective enabling behavior is quite simple: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). Enabling others in the discovery and development of their gifts is the most effective way to enhance the total religious education program of the installation.

Directing the Religious Education Program: Complimentary Vitality

As the Director of Religious Education is encouraged and enabled by the understanding supervisory chaplain, he/she will be a multiplier of ministry to soldiers and their families in our chapel communities. There is a complimentary role that breathes new life into those who come seeking God's will in their lives and the working out of that will in their community. The DRE, as a member of the Staff Chaplain's primary staff, as planner and designer of the religious education program and as enabler of others is another key person who brings spiritual vitality into the effective chapel ministry.

Teaching Adults Effectively: the Chaplain as Educator

Cynthia Felix Burns

Adult education is a major aspect of the ministry of the church today. In the United States alone, millions of adults are voluntarily involved in adult educational programs in local churches and chapels each week. In spite of its popularity, however, some adult educational programs are not meeting the needs, or affecting the lives of those involved. Teachers of adults believe that they are not teaching effectively because participants do not prepare for class sessions, nor appear to receive any information that will cause change to occur in their lives.

The ministry of the military chaplain is largely a ministry to adults in an educational setting. Whether teaching a group of NCO's a course in stress management or conducting a small group Bible study, a chaplain's major function is to convey information to others in such a way that a life changing experience results. If a chaplain is to be effective in his/her role as an educator, an effective program must be developed that will promote these life changing experiences.

The key to an effective adult educational program, in any setting, is effective teaching. Many teachers believe that if they present the material in an organized way, are enthusiastic, and care about those involved, learning will occur. Many also assume that if they teach a wide variety of subjects, the adults will learn what they need to know. Adult teaching, however, requires more than good organization, enthusiasm, and variety. In order to be effective, in addition to these qualities, an adult educator must possess knowledge in three specific areas: knowledge of content, knowledge of learners, and knowledge of methods. Though each of these areas will be discussed to a certain extent, the

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major focus will be on the knowledge of learners and how adults learn. If a chaplain as a teacher of adults, is to be effective, an understanding of the soldier as a learner, and the learning process is mandatory. Without such understanding, organization, enthusiasm, knowledge of content, and knowledge of methods are useless.

Knowledge of Content

The first area of concern is knowledge of content. To be an effective teacher, the chaplain must first of all know well the content of the subject matter that is to be taught. In the case of religious education, this would require a wellgrounded knowledge of the Bible, church dogma, ethics, etc. A thorough understanding of the subject matter will enable the chaplain to organize the material properly, to appear with poise and assurance, and to serve as a resource person in the adult setting.

A teacher of adults acquires an understanding of the subject matter that is to be taught by being a learner himself. A chaplain must continually be engaged in the learning process to keep abreast of the subject matter, any new developments or discoveries, as well as current trends and practices. Dr. Harry Overstreet stressed the importance of learning competence on the part of teachers when he said, "The adult educator cannot be simply a person of good will and generous impulses—and large ignorance. He must know something well."[1] Overstreet continues and adds four qualities relating to learning that a teacher should possess.

> "He must himself want to go on learning; he must have some expertness that gives, as it were, a vertebrate character to what he says and does; he must have a sense of relationships broad enough to redeem him from narrow speculation; and he must have a sense of community—a power to think and act in terms of the real problems and resources of real places where real people live."[2]

Knowledge of Learners

Having the ability to think and act in terms of real problems and real people brings about the second area of concern, knowledge of the learner. The chaplain must be interested in understanding the learner and the learning process, not only for better insight in the soldier he is teaching, but also for a better comprehension of his own process of learning. One must remember that the actions of learners can only be understood from the point of view of a learner. Consequently, a chaplain must try to understand the soldier's view of the learning situation, what it means to him, and how it relates to his goals. If the soldier is not responding, the chaplain must put himself into the soldier's position to discover the reasons for his lack of response. By understanding both the

[1] J. R. Kidd, *How Adults Learn* (New York: Cambridge, 1973), p. 298.

[2] Kidd, p. 299.

learner and himself, the chaplain as educator can create an effective learning environment, as well as a better appreciation for the values and aspirations that affect adult learning.

In understanding and knowing the soldier as an adult learner, the key is that the soldier must be viewed as an individual person. Each military member is a unique person who brings to the learning situation a unique set of past experiences which will, in one way or another, influence his learning process. Since only individuals learn, their unique characteristics and differences must be understood by the chaplain for effective teaching and learning to occur.

Roles and Responsibilities

The first difference among soldiers that must be understood is the differences in the roles and responsibilities of adults. One must realize that each soldier is involved in different roles and responsibilities based on each one's development in the adult life cycle. Adulthood involves a large period of one's life, during which one goes through various stages of development. Each stage of development in the adult life cycle is characterized by different developmental tasks, "tasks which arise at or about a certain point in the life of an individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, and difficulty with later tasks."[3]

As soldiers progress through the life cycle, they often find themselves facing new demands and expectations from those around them. The chaplain must realize that the tasks of young adult soldiers (ages 18-30) are different from those of the middle adult soldiers (ages 30-55). Not only are adults engaging in different tasks in each stage of development, but also they are engaging in different tasks within each stage of the life cycle. The chaplain as educator must realize that each individual is at a different stage both in and within the various stages in the process of adulthood. Although the military chaplain's primary concern is with soldiers in the young adult and middle adult stages of development, with the increasing number of retired military personnel continuing to be actively involved in the military community and chapel programs, the chaplain must be aware of their developmental tasks as well. (See Appendix for a list of the Developmental Tasks of Adults)

Background

Another difference among soldiers that must be realized is that adults each possess a different background, and, as mentioned earlier, different experiences. This diversity in background and experience grows out of individual differences in such areas as development in the adult life cycle,

[3] Robert J. Havighurst, *Developmental Tasks and Education* (New York: Longman Inc., 1972), p. 2.

social economic status, education, cultural attitudes, and beliefs. As adults grow older, and add more experiences to their lives, these individual differences become more variable and diverse. These differences in turn, affect a soldier's view toward people, objects, and events in his environment, as well as the learning process.

These experiences and differing backgrounds can be either advantageous or harmful to an individual, and to the learning process, depending upon how the soldier has perceived and interpreted such experiences in his past. The chaplain as educator, as well as the soldier, must be able to put adult experiences into a proper perspective, and to realize when past experiences and diversities of background are hindering the learning process. In order to accomplish this task successfully, the chaplain must apply his or her knowledge of psychological differences to the learning process, and understand how these differences affect how and what the soldier learns.

Personality

Although there is a great diversity among people, most adults have the same sort of abilities for not only learning to comprehend, but also in making predictions about and taking action in the world around them. Most individuals are relatively consistent in the way they react, think, experience their environment, and behave towards it. These somewhat consistent ways of responding are all manifestations of an adult's personality. Consequently, these aspects influence an individual in the way he or she behaves, in an acceptable or unacceptable manner, and according to the style and effectiveness of the learning process.

The first aspect the chaplain must understand is the characteristics of personality in general, which influence intellectual potential. The main characteristics of personality are found on two continuums, one stretching between the extremes of introversion and extroversion, the second continuum stretching between neuroticism and stability. Most people fall somewhere along these continuums, their position influencing which method of teaching is most successful in their learning process. Introverts are more comfortable with highly structured and well guided programs, while extroverts prefer to work things out for themselves through exploration.[4] Chaplains as educators should understand personality differences in order to plan effective teaching and learning.

Several diagnostic evaluations exist which can help determine basic personality types. There are, however, several aspects of psychology that can affect personality and the learning process that are not measurable in this manner. One aspect is intelligence. Intelligence is widely believed to be the biggest difference between adults among the factors which influence the way they learn.

[4] Henry Jacobsen, *You Can Teach Adults* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1981), p. 17.

Two types of intelligence exist which affect adult learning. The first type, fluid intelligence, is without form, independent of education, and is involved in a wide range of intellectual activities. Fluid intelligence is involved in a person's ability to view complex relationships, to maintain and recognize the immediate environment in short-term memory, and to engage in abstract reasoning. This type of intelligence is primarily dependent on heredity, although it can also be influenced by disease or injury.

The second type of intelligence is crystallized intelligence and is the result of a mixture of fluid intelligence and cultural knowledge. Intelligence is crystallized because it results from experience. It increases with the adult's experience in life and education, which then provides the person with the means to deal with new experiences. Crystallized intelligence is involved in an individual's ability to retain general information, comprehend verbally, cope with social situations, and engage in arithmatic reasoning.

Most learning tasks, in which soldiers will be involved, require interaction between the two kinds of intelligence. During childhood and adolescence, both fluid and crystallized intelligence develops. As adults grow older, however, fluid intelligence decreases, while crystallized intelligence increases. Consequently, as a soldier grows older, certain types of learning may become more difficult, while other types may become easier. The soldier and chaplain must understand that compensations will have to be made for persons, based on their level of intelligence and on what type is most prevalent in their learning process.[5]

Another important aspect of psychology affecting personality is an understanding of the two major categories of mental competence, both of which reflect a soldier's cognitive style and preferred learning strategy. Pask has termed these categories as the serialistic and holistic approach to learning. The serialistic approach to studying new material is to string a sequence of cognitive structures together. The individual assimilates the long sequences of information in this manner, creating a total picture, and thus, becomes intolerant of useless information that requires extra memory. The holistic approach, on the other hand, attempts to gain an overview of what is to be learned so that the necessary details will fall into place. In order to learn material as a whole, a high degree of relations between the details must exist.[6] The chaplain must be able to recognize those soldiers in each category to accommodate both in the educational setting.

Research has also found that adults also differ from each other in the way that they perceive themselves in their relationship to the environment. The psychological characteristics of perception also influence personality and the learning process. Witkin has discovered that

[5] R. Bernard Lovell, *Adult Learning* (New York: Halsted Press, 1980), p. 98-101.

[6] Lovell, p. 106.

some individuals tend to rely on external clues in viewing their environment. These soldiers are influenced by information from the outside world, and are called field-dependent. Field-dependent adults require a learning process that involves them in working with people.

Witkin also discovered that other individuals rely totally on their own internal processes, and are not easily swayed by external evidence that appears contradictory. These individuals are called field-independent and, in the learning process, they tend to work successfully alone. Soldiers that are field-independent will think more analytically than field-dependents, and score higher on spatial tasks. Most people exhibit some characteristics of each category, however, over a period of time, adults tend to stabilize to a degree that they can be known as either field-dependent or field-independent.[7]

A final aspect of personality that affects the learning process is the difference between impulsivity and reflectivity. In the learning setting, some participants, though at the adult level very few, will impulsively reply with the first possible solution, which is many times incorrect. Other learners will be more reflective and delay replying until they are sure of the correct answer. Reflective learners seem to have a desire to be correct, and can tolerate the psychological pressures involved in evaluating the answer in their minds. The impulsive learners, on the other hand, tend to rely on the instructor or other participants for the evaluation of their solutions.

Willingness to Learn

A fourth major difference among adults is found in their willingness to learn. Soldiers will differ greatly in their willingness or motivation to learn, and it is imperative that the chaplain be aware of several factors that can influence a soldier and his learning process. A knowledge of the factors will then lead the chaplain into a knowledge of the methods or styles of teaching required for effective learning by the adult learner.

A first factor in the willingness to learn is that many adults are not willing to learn because they believe that they are too old to learn effectively. This presupposition, that many middle and older adults possess, is entirely false and unscientific. The truth is that every adult regardless of age, mentality, maturity, or experience can learn satisfactorily.

Research has shown that there are changes in learning ability throughout the adult years. Between the ages of eighteen and forty, very little change in learning ability occurs. After age forty the processes of aging begin to affect the learning process, and ability declines about one percent per year.[8] Adults can still learn effectively, however, by changing their learning strategies to compensate for declining ability.

[7] Lovell, p. 107.

[8] Jacobsen, p. 16.

While it is true that everyone can learn, each person is also limited in some degree as to the amount of learning that can occur. Adults are limited in amounts of learning by their learning potential, or capacity to learn, and by psychological restrictions that they place upon themselves. While soldiers may have little control over their learning potential, they can make better use of their learning capacity to break down any barriers to learning.

Another factor in the adult's willingness to learn is in the area of motivation. Motivation is the process in which a person is led to attempt to satisfy a need or interest. Since many different needs and interests are present in each individual, different types of motivation are needed in order to assure soldiers are learning.

Maslow has identified a theory of human motivation which can help a chaplain understand adult motivation. Maslow believes that each individual has five basic needs which are related to one another hierarchically: food, clothing, and shelter; security; love; status; and self-actualization. Soldiers are motivated by their desire to satisfy or maintain these basic needs in their lives. A sixth need is also present that is not related to the hierarchy of basic needs. This is the need for knowledge and understanding which can also bring motivation to soldiers, and help in satisfying their basic needs.[9]

Although soldiers desire to meet their basic needs, their motivation to do so in a learning situation will vary. The reasons for such differences in motivation are once again related to the experiences, personality, and past achievement in learning situations discussed earlier. Consequently, an understanding of these areas is important for the chaplain to be effective.

A last factor in the willingness to learn is self-concept. The self-concept of a soldier affects his approach to, and level of performance in educational activities. Three elements of self-concept influence learning: self-image, the impression one has of oneself; the ideal-self, or how a soldier perceives all he could be, ought to be, or would like to be; and self-esteem, the feelings the soldier has about the person he believes himself to be. As an adult becomes older, past roles are incorporated into the self-image, eventually affecting the way one responds to the role of a learner.

Evaluating your own approach to education and learning based upon the foregoing principles would be profitable. For example, where are you on the continuum between extrovertism and introvertism? Did your preference for structured programmed learning as an introvert enhance your experiences as a student in graduate school, or at the chaplains' school, or in Command and General Staff College? Did you learn more when material was presented in logical sequence, each relative to the next segment? Or was a holistic view of the material necessary for

[9] John R. Verduin, Jr., Harry G. Miller, and Charles E. Greer, *Adults Teaching Adults* (Austin: Learning Concepts, 1977), pp. 12-13.

you to grasp the "big picture" before effective learning could take place? The US Army Chaplain Center and School employs both group process learning, and individual research and study. How did you react to learning objectives presented in both these methods? Would you conclude that your preferred style is field-dependent or field-independent?

A self-understanding in terms of the learning process is helpful to the chaplain as he or she prepares to teach adults who come from a wide spectrum of personalities, with varied motivations for learning and different approaches to that learning task.

Knowledge of Methods

Once the chaplain has a thorough knowledge of the potential learner, he must then know how to incorporate this information into an effective learning session. Consequently, a third area of concern, the knowledge of methods and the way adults learn, must be examined. Knowledge of such procedures can free the chaplain to see each soldier as a whole unique person with special needs and interests, so successful instruction will occur.

It is difficult to define all the acts, skills, or methods needed by a teacher of adults. Many styles of teaching exist, but the most successful teachers have always developed their own based on their own experience and observation. In the area of adult education, however, there has been some research in the area of teaching style that can benefit the chaplain as adult educator.

Differences in teaching styles can also be expressed along continuums that include permissiveness versus control, aggressiveness versus protectiveness, and emphasis on content versus emphasis on participation. The chaplain must realize that, just as there are many roles and differences among soldiers, there are differences in teaching and learning styles. Each style of teaching may have its advantages in certain situations, however, the learning styles of the individuals involved must be utilized if successful teaching is to occur.[10]

As a military chaplain, many times information must be presented in the traditional form of a military briefing. This may place certain restrictions on freedom of expression. Do not, however, allow this to stifle creativity in the classroom setting. Learn to use a variety of methods that will enhance the learning opportunities and potential for each individual.

Included in the knowledge of methods is knowledge of how adults learn. James DeBoy has identified eight principles of adult learning. By understanding these principles, the chaplain can better utilize procedures and methods of instruction to their fullest extent.

1. Adults learn best when they are treated with respect, as self-directing persons. A self-directed learner is seen as a person who can

[10] Kidd, pp. 295-296.

make decisions and can determine one's own needs. Most adults want to have greater control over their learning, but do not know how. The chaplain can help by treating them with respect as a part of the instructional process.

2. Adults learn best when the learning situation relates to their past experiences. As mentioned earlier, chaplains need to be aware that adults have different experiences. They should then relate the content and method of learning to the experiences of the soldiers, and activities should be designed to help them become more aware of the value of their experiences.

3. Adults learn best when they have participated in the planning of the learning activities, and have set their own goals. Such planning can help assure that activities will meet adult needs. Consequently, participants will make a greater effort to participate, and their level of interest will be higher.

4. Adults learn best when they are comfortable. Not only should they be physically comfortable so that socializing can occur, but they should also be comfortable with those around them. Adults learn best when they are with their peers and can relate to one another in the learning environment.

5. Adults also learn best when there are opportunities for a variety of learning experiences. A variety of topics and methods should be utilized. The chaplain should remember, however, that adults do have different learning styles and preferences for the way they learn, so results and reactions may vary.

6. Adults learn best in a problem-centered situation. Adults are more apt to respond when a question needs resolving or a task needs doing.

7. Adults learn best when they see immediate progress and results from the learning setting. Adults have immediate needs that they wish to have met. Consequently, they prefer teaching that has an immediate application and can help with personal tasks.

8. Adults learn best when they evaluate themselves. If they see themselves as independent, self-directing people, they are often resentful of being evaluated by others. Instead, the chaplain should encourage soldiers to evaluate themselves and their own progress.[11]

To incorporate each of these principles, the chaplain must be involved in an holistic approach to education. Holistic education according to Wolf J. Rinke is "a functional, integrated, and generalized model of education which focuses on the whole teaching/learning situation, and varies the teaching/learning strategy to meet the needs of the learner, the

[11] James J. DeBoy, Jr., *Getting Started in Adult Religious Education* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), pp. 75-78.

teacher and the situation, in an effort to attain educational outcomes which are greater than the sum of the parts."[12]

As you reflect on these principles of learning, consider the various contexts in which you as a chaplain-educator present material to adults. From preaching a worship service sermon, to a briefing to newcomers to the unit or installation, or perhaps presenting a class to basic trainees in communication, these eight principles of teaching/learning are operative. To what extent can you control the arena in which you teach? As suggested, treating students with respect is high priority. But in a basic training situation, most trainees are instructed in a regimented setting where it is impossible to respect individual differences; and they are not given latitude in developing their educational objectives!

Is interpersonal communication and interaction high on your priority list in your classroom, or do you prefer to give lectures to students with little time for interaction?

Finally, ask yourself, what is my preferred style for learning? Do I agree with these eight principles and affirm these are essential for effective learning in the classroom? If so, are these my preferred style for teaching? Do I intentionally incorporate these into my lesson planning? Your answers to these questions can be illuminating and growth-producing in your ministry as an adult educator.

Conclusion

The adult education opportunities offered by the chaplain and the chapel program are an important, though often neglected area of ministry. The biggest problem with adult education in general is that the teachers are not effective in the learning process because they lack an adequate understanding of the learners they teach. To avoid this common pitfall, the military chaplain must have a thorough knowledge of content, and of the need to be a learner himself. By becoming a learner, the chaplain can become aware of soldier problems and differences, thus coming into a more thorough knowledge of learners. To understand soldiers as learners, the chaplain must realize that soldiers are unique individuals with different experiences, development, personalities and motivations to learn. Since each one is different, each has a preferred style of learning. In attaining knowledge of methods and how adults learn, the chaplain must realize that these differences will cause soldiers to react differently to styles and methods of teaching. The chaplain as educator must try to involve soldiers in a process of learning, however, he must realize that soldiers may be learning in spite of outward appearances. By providing a holistic approach that incorporates different methods for different needs, more effective teaching will result, and the educational opportu-

[12] Wolf J. Rinke, Maj., "Holistic Education: Toward a Functional Approach to Adult Education," *Lifelong Learning* 5(April, 1982), p. 13.

nities offered by the chaplain for soldiers and family members will be greatly improved.

Appendix

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS OF THE ADULT LIFE CYCLE[13]

Young Adults

- Selecting a mate
- Learning to live with a marriage partner
- Starting a family
- Rearing children
- Managing a home
- Getting started in an occupation
- Taking on civic responsibility
- Finding a congenial social group

Middle adults

- Assisting teen-age children to become responsive adults
- Achieving adult social and civic responsibility
- Reaching and maintaining satisfactory performance in one's occupational career
- Developing adult leisure time activities
- Relating oneself to one's spouse as a person
- Accept and adjust to the physiological changes of middle age
- Adjusting to aging parents

Older Adults

- Adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health
- Adjusting to retirement and reduced income
- Adjusting to death of spouse
- Establishing an explicit affiliation with one's age group
- Adopting and adapting social roles in a flexible way
- Establishing satisfactory living arrangements

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[13] Havighurst, pp. 85-113.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Pastoral Care Emergencies, Ministering to People in Crisis.

David K. Switzer,

Paulist Press, c 1989, paperback 223 pgs., $12.95

This is a good book. Every once in a while it is profitable to read a book which gathers the breath and depth of Crisis Care in a short volume. This book does just that. This volume reminds us of lessons and concepts learned but not used every day. It brought to my consciousness pastoral care emergencies that may happen either again or for the first time. This book started me to think about some things that I hadn't thought of in a while.

David K. Switzer is Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at the Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. In this book his reflections and knowledge should stimulate thought and personal growth in a pastor or pastoral worker. He spends the first part of the book speaking about the concept of emergency and crisis. He writes in a reflective and insightful way about the pastoral care giver. His reflections on what it is to be a care giver both enable and define our ministry. Dr. Switzer appreciates the task of the pastor but clearly strips it of its aura of omnipotence. His reflections on being a care giver focus clearly on the great strengths of the pastor and makes pastors aware of their real limits.

After focusing on the caregiver, Switzer discusses in a practical and comprehensive way various situations. He has chapters on Visiting the Physically Ill, Hospital Emergencies, Ministry to the Dying, Responding to Bereavement, Suicidal Persons and their Families, Marriage and Family Life and Marriage and Family Emergencies. He has informative sections on mental Illness and Alcoholism. Sufficiently and succinctly he describes family systems theory. He lobbies hard for the systems approach to family counseling. For many of us these are new ways of pastoral care. I, however, was personally disappointed to notice that he did not include Delores Curran in the bibliography. Her work with families is well known to many Army Chaplains.

Dr. Switzer groups his bibliography after each chapter. It is a practical resource. He divides and sub-titles his chapters well. All in all, this is an easy book to read. It's chapters stand alone, so one can pick it up and put it down. You can, if you wish, start in the middle.

I recommend this book to both those who are starting in pastoral care and those who have had long experience. Both can profit. Dr. Switzer enables, reminds, encourages and enriches us. His book is a valuable and comfortable companion to ministry.

Chaplain (COL) John E. Watterson
U.S. Army

Experiencing God's Tremendous Love: Entering Into Relational Prayer

Maureen Conroy

Paulist Press, 1988

Softcover, 118 pgs, $5.95

Maureen Conroy is a member of the Sisters of Mercy and is co-director of the Upper Room Spiritual Center in Neptune, New Jersey. She is engaged in on-going spiritual direction and teaches part-time at Creighton University. She holds an M. Div. degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and a D. Min. from St. Mary's University, Baltimore.

Maureen Conroy genuinely invites the reader to discover, enter into, and experience God's tremendous love. She continuously challenges the reader to go beyond their present relationship with God and experience His love to the point of changing his/her limiting notions. She pleads, through her writing ability, with the reader to evaluate their personal experience with God and offers solid and biblical approaches for an exciting journey of relational prayer.

This book is easy to read and is written with simplicity. The natural progression offers the reader a very practical manner to engage in the topic which the author desires to share. Her introduction is forceful; yet, informative as she explains her intentions. Her purpose is threefold. One is to invite you to reflect upon your learned notion and experience of God. Two is to provide an opportunity for you to explore various manifestations of God's love. And three, to help you enter more deeply into God's love.

The book contains several approaches to relational prayer. The author uses theological reflections, various demonstrations, stories, and individual experiences. She quotes Ignatius of Loyola freely and consistantly. This is one of the areas that may limit the scope of the work. However, she deals with such quotes with generosity and a solid background of early Church writers.

Conroy testifies to God's love through His active envolvement, the Scripture, and creation. It is out of these truths that she testifies our ability to "enter into relationship with God as we experience a God who is profoundly personal, deeply relational, and intimately involved in our

lives." Through her ability to tantalize the spiritual palate one is drawn into a deep desire to experience God's self-offering. She claims that God's self-offering "happens through grace, prayer, our humanness, and human experience."

The ultimate strength in her book is that she creates an opportunity for the reader to initiate a journey involving relational prayer from the first chapter of the book. Her conclusions are placed at the end of each chapter in addition to the end of the book. She offers practical suggestions for personal growth and experience through her sections entitled, "Suggestions for Prayer." These suggestions are so rich that the reader must stop and contemplate the vast opportunities being offered. Only through such times of contemplation will the reader meet the goal of the author.

Any person, regardless of denominational background can benefit tremendously from this book. Maureen Conroy sticks to her topic, her purpose of writing, and is unashamed of her personal journey regarding relational prayer.

Every chaplain and chaplain assistant would definitely enhance their personal devotions by working through this simple, easy to read; yet, dynamic work.

Chaplain (CPT) Michael W. Dugal
U.S. Army

Encountering Jesus: A Debate on Christology

Stephen T. Davis, Editor

John Knox Press, Atlanta, GA., 1988

Paperback 200 pages, $13.95

A chaplain friend and colleague remarked when he saw the title of this book: "Debate? How can we debate? We know who Jesus is." Well, in fact, what we do not know about Jesus far exceeds what we know with certainty. At the beginning of this century Albert Schweitzer ended the quest for the historical Jesus. "He comes to us as one unknown," Schweitzer wrote.

By the middle of the century scholars began a second quest. This time they applied the most up to date tools to the New Testament to search for the authentic words of Jesus. The conclusion of the quests was simply this: We know very little about the historical person who called disciples, taught by the sea of Galilee, and was crucified outside of Jerusalem; and many of the words the evangelists attributed to him, he did not say.

The quest for the historical Jesus brought the distinction between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith" into common parlance. Theologians thus asked Christological questions, especially about the Chalcedonian formulation, as well as historical ones.

Encountering Jesus plunges the reader into the middle of a sea of questions. Maybe the reader can merely watch the key players debate the issues. The players are: John B. Cobb, Jr., Ingraham Memorial Professor of Theology at the School of Theology at Claremont and Avery Professor of religion at Claremont Graduate School; Stephen T. Davis, professor of philosophy of religion at Claremont McKenna College; John Hick, Danforth Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at Claremont Graduate School; Rebecca D. Pentz, a former lecturer in philosophy at Scripps College; and James M. Robinson, Arthur Letts Jr. Professor of Religion at Claremont Graduate School and director of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity. More than likely, the reader will be drawn into the debate as he or she thinks about his or her own understanding of the Christ.

The explicit questions the authors address focus on Christology. Implicit questions also arise. These are questions about sources, hermeneutics, and context.

Each scholar writes an essay on Christology. The other four write a short critique. The essayist, who writes a response to the critiques, has the last word in each chapter. Two postscripts follow the debate. Michael Wyschogrod, professor of philosophy at Baruch College of the City University of New York, writes a Jewish response. John K. Roth, Russel K. Pitzer professor of philosophy at Claremont McKenna College, writes a Christian postscript from his point of view, that of a Presbyterian layperson.

Each scholar approaches Christology differently. John Hick writes about an inspiration Christology. Steven Davis argues for a "maximalist" Christology which defends the formulation of Chalcedon. Rebecca Pentz, the only woman to contribute to the book, sets out to show how traditional Christology can affirm feminism. James Robinson writes about a wisdom Christology for which he finds evidence in the New Testament and early Christian literature, but which was aborted. John Cobb defends and expands a notion he developed in his book *Christ in a Pluralistic Age:* viz., he identifies "Christ as creative transformation."

The debate is lively. At points the criticisms are sharp. The participants sometimes experience frustration. In one critique Robinson writes: "In spite of the format of this book, which has been designed to produce fruitful dialogue and expedite progress in our mutual thinking. I am very discouraged about the possibility of real dialogue." The reader, too, senses that lines are drawn between the participants. Readers will likely take a side in the debate. Nevertheless, I cannot imagine anyone could read this book without being challenged to rethink his or her own understanding of the Christ.

Chaplain (CPT) Robert L. Flaherty
U.S. Army

Acts in *Interpretion: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*

William H. Willimon

Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988

197 pages, $16.95

> William H. Willimon is Minister to the University and Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry at Duke University. The interpretation series of commentaries is designed for use by teachers and preachers who desire an exposition of the scriptures that simultaneously explains and applies the text. A minimum of space is devoted to matters of authorship, textual criticism, historical veracity, or word studies. The commentaries are in essay form and treat units of material rather than individual verses. The writers are cognizant of liturgical applications for ministers employing the lectionary and therefore often suggest seasonal applications and emphases.

While Willimon notes that the text is multivalent and therefore capable of several applications, his thesis is that *Acts* is chiefly designed for the edification, challenge, and reformation of the church in Theophilus' day. This church was seeking to survive under the shadow of a Roman domination that threatened its spiritual, social, and personal integrity. Luke uses the foil of the apostolic church to indirectly argue about the nature of Christianity and the meaning of discipleship. In particular, Luke argues for a prophetic stance against a society that relegated the church to a precariously dangerous minority status. Subsidiary purposes include: an attempt to explain the Christian movement as a realization of the promises of Israel; a demonstration of the on-going work of Christ through the medium of the church; the recapitulation of events in Christ's life in the lives of his successors and the church; and an attempt to show the essentially "unhindered" nature of the kerygmatic proclamation.

In the introduction, Willimon gives his method of biblical application. The church consists of individuals who have imbued the stories of redemption in order to discern a pattern of meaning in life. The result is a transformation from despair to hope because the world can now be seen as a place "where God is busy making good of his promises" (p. 3). Because the "world" has been conquered, it is no longer necessary to accept the racial, economic, and religious barriers of mankind as unaltrably given. The church, to the degree it is shaped by this vision, is God's proleptic witness to the direction history is headed.

Willimon is at his best in those sections in which he gives pastoral application to the message of *Acts*. For instance, the ascension message not to "stare" but to "go" seeks to place the church between the tension and polarity of uninformed apocolyptism on the one hand, and the despair and stodginess of a church without apocolyptic hope on the other. The earnest prayers of the early disciples indicate that faith is more than business and strenuous human effort, a fact that is an often-needed corrective to our frenetic activity and a humble reminder that only God

can give us what we most desperately need. The chilling tale of Ananias & Sapphira exposes possessions for what they are—a matter of life and death to the Christian community. Gamaliel's admonition that the Christians be viewed perspicaciously indicates that even those in bureaucracies can be good and righteous—a fact that should be noted by chaplains!

Willimon notes several other applications of the message of *Acts*. The martyrdom of Stephen teaches that God is able to use the bad that happens to us for his good purposes. The story of Simon the magician reminds us that commercial interests and worldly entrepreneurship do not mix well with the Spirit—a message with immediate relevance to our tele-evangelistic age. Society's hunch that a politician's personal life should be of concern to the Christian public is confirmed as Paul speaks to Felix and Drusilla on matters of "justice, self-control, and the judgement to come."

Willimon places little credence in the idea that *Acts* is designed to win toloration from Roman officials for the nascent church. In rereading *Acts* for the purpose of the review, I disagree. Luke goes to great pains to indirectly praise those officials who tolerated or embraced the faith; and he circuitously criticizes those who fail to look deeply into the way by noting their relative laziness, incompetence, sinfulness, and malfeasance.

Willimon also insists that the stance of the church is most properly that of critic and prophet against the surrounding "beautiful and seductive culture." Yet Luke also presents Paul as one who could "be all things to all people." In Paul's case, the bony finger of the prophet denouncing society could become the open hand of the rhetorician on Mars Hill identifying common ground between culture and Christ. Neither position should be taken as normative in all situations.

This work, coupled with an exegetical commentary, can provide the preacher with seminal ideas for creative homilies on this often neglected book. This volume, and series from which it comes, should find welcome space in the chaplain's library.

Chaplain (CPT) Stephen A. Sanders
U.S. Army

Encounters With Jesus

Victor Books, 1989 143 pages.

Frank Barker—Senior pastor Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama. Author of *A Living Hope*, a study of 1st Peter.

Maureen Rank—Free lance author of several books. A former member of the Navigators staff.

This book is a Victor Adult Bible study of 13 sessions. The authors have written an up-to-date study of 12 instances in the Gospels where Jesus had "up close and personal" contact with people, including the Samaritan woman, Bartimaeus, Zacheus, the widow with the mite, Nicodemus

and seven others. I found the style of these two authors to be very readable and understandable. They use many up-to-date and current illustrations.

This book, along with its companion leader's guide would be an effective and useful tool for both senior high and adult Sunday School classes. I highly recommend it for chapel activities, as well as a Bible study for PWOC or other Bible study groups. I would also recommend it as a resource to be listed in the Protestant Resource Guide.

Chaplain (CPT) Thomas A. Condry
U.S. Army

Iuo Lesbaupin, ***Blessed Are the Persecuted: Christian Life in the Roman Life, A.D. 64-313.***

Robert R. Barr, translator.

Maryknoll, New York Orbis Books, 1987, 98 pages, $16.95

Robert R. Barr brings us the first English translation of Iuo Lesbaupin's *Blessed Are the Persecuted*, originally published in 1975. The book is a brief, but excellent, study of the persecution of the early martyrs, as well as a theology of persecution.

Lesbaupin presents the history of the early Church as it developed in reaction to the persecutions by the Romans. During the period from Christ to the Edict of Milan, Lesbaupin estimates that more than 100,000 Christians were martyred. Christians had lived peacefully with the Romans until the fire of 64 A.D. which destroyed Rome under Nero's rule. From then until 313 when Galerius was forced to issue an edict acknowledging the ". . . usefulness of the persecution of Christians because of their unflagging resistance," Christians were persecuted for a number of reasons.

For one, their different religious customs were viewed by the Romans as inhumane, e.g., cannibalism and infant sacrifice, among others. Also their refusal to perform pagan rituals increased hostility towards them. Finally, accordingly to Lesbaupin, once a clear distinction appeared between Judaism and Christianity, the Romans then perceived Christianity as a new religion which threatened the state. Lesbaupin discusses these reasons for persecution in light of the legislative actions taken by the major Roman emperors, among others, Nero, Trajan, Hadrian and Diocletian.

In addition, Lesbaupin develops a theology of persecution resting upon the power of the Christian witness. The martyrs who put down their lives for their faith led, in turn, to the Apologists. Always the rallying cry for the early Christian community when under siege from their Roman persecutors was ". . . never give up on anyone who had fallen," neither on those imprisoned awaiting their death nor on those who had abandoned their faith out of fear of persecution. In the last third of his book, Lesbaupin's comments on the book of Revelation

forecasts the final victory of good over evil, the message of hope for modern Christians.

For students of early Church history, for those who look to the early martyrs for inspiration, and for those who today face persecution for their Christian beliefs, Lesbaupin's book will provide both historical perspective and spiritual guidance.

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Cecil Community College
North East, Maryland

Conscience & Conflict: A Trilogy of One-Actor Plays: Thomas Merton, Pope John XXIII, Martin Luther.

by Anthony T. Padovano,

Paulist Press, Mahwah, 1988. $7.95.

This book gives the texts of three television programs produced by Paulist Press. It was written to help viewers examine more closely the thoughts of three men who impacted the Roman Church. Padovano has provided a text that helps Christians to view three journeys of faith in dramatic first person presentations.

Short biographies set up the plays and give the reader vital information that enhances his or her understanding of the struggles of conscience each man displayed. Excellent study questions follow each play. They are suitable for individual or group settings.

I noticed three recurring themes in each play: submission and obedience, parental love or lack of it, love for the church and the church's love for the individual. I have found these three themes to be recurring subjects that I come across in counseling. To understand these different perspectives and faith walks that impact on the well-being of soldiers gives this book a usefulness that is surprising. I plan to use portions of this book in my counseling.

Anyone serious about the impact of the faith journey on the church and the individual would profit by buying this book. I recommend it highly.

Chaplain (CPT) Richard J. Chavarria
U.S. Army

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